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## THE STEP AT THE GATE.

BY MATTIE DYER BRITTS.

The shadows of eve are falling  
Across the garden wall,  
The summer wind comes rustling by,  
And showers of rose leaves fall.  
Where I sit at my cottage window,  
And dream, and listen and wait  
For the sound of a cheery whistle  
And a well-known step at the gate.

The tea-kettle out in the kitchen  
Is humming a noisy song;  
"I'm boiling, I say! Time to get tea!  
Why don't you come along!"  
I've set the table already,  
But the singing kettle must wait,  
For the tea will spoil if I make it,  
Till I hear the step at the gate.

Baby sleeps in her cradle—  
Sleeping with all her might,  
And closely over her blossom-blue eyes  
Are drawn their curtains white.  
But her nap is nearly over,  
She seldom sleeps so late—  
She'll wake in a glow of gladness  
When she hears the step at the gate.

This is our little kingdom,  
This cottage with vines o'ergrown—  
Papa's the king and mamma's the queen,  
And baby's the heir to the throne.  
Where lingers the king, I wonder?  
Supper will be so late?  
Ah, there he comes! Baby, wake up,  
For I hear the step at the gate.

## Pearl of Pearls: OR, CLOUDS AND SUNBEAMS.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.,  
AUTHOR OF "HOODWINKED," "HERCULES, THE  
HUNCHBACK," "FLAMING TALISMAN," "BLACK  
CHISEL," ETC., ETC.

### CHAPTER IV.

#### BETROTHED IN AN HOUR OF DEATH.

"Free!" was the one, strange word that fell from the lips of Isabel Rochestine—followed by a long silence, in which she and the handsome Claude Paine formed a tableau almost weird in its attitude.

"Did you speak, Mrs. Rochestine?" His question roused her. She started, and looked up into his face.

"Did I?"—whisperingly. "I scarce know. Oh! this is fearful news, Mr. Paine."

But there were no tears in her eyes, to make natural the tremor of her voice.

"As I said: I regret that I have had to be the bearer of this. I do not wonder that it is all the more severe coming at this hour of gayety and pleasure."

"It is so unexpected! I—Mr. Paine—will you excuse me? You must see that I—I need to be alone—" she arose, and would have left him; but he interrupted, and detained her.

"Nay, Mrs. Rochestine—one moment. At such a time as this, the sympathy of a friend—I mean an old and sincere friend, like myself—ought to give nearly as much comfort to a wounded heart, as the balm of flowing tears. And I know it is because you would weep that you wish to retire. At least, you will not go before I have uttered one word?"

"You are very kind, Mr. Paine."

"Sit down, I beg."

"Wait!" She struck a silver bell that was upon the table, bringing one of the hall servants to her presence.

"Close the house, immediately. To any one who may call again, to-day, say, without exception, that I am unwell, and can receive no visitors."

The servant withdrew, marveling as he went, to execute her order.

"It has been long since you saw your husband, Mrs. Rochestine?" said Paine, when they were alone.

"Over a year," she answered, slowly, sinking back into a large chair, and toying nervously with the watch-charms at her belt.

"And, in that time, you have heard very little of him?"

"Very little."

"And what may, or may not, have been his thoughts of you?"

"Mr. Paine!" She darted a quick glance at him—one that, good reader of faces as he was, he could not comprehend; for it did not express the reproach her words seemed to convey.

There was a long pause. He had something important to speak of, a subject to touch upon which was dangerous, just then, in his opinion; though he had made this woman a study, and thought he knew her well.

And it is, generally, a rule: that, when a man thinks he knows a woman best, then is the time he knows her least.

His gaze roamed around the room, as if to make sure of their privacy; then centered on her.

Her head was drooping; her mind was engaged—perhaps with thoughts of Horace Rochestine, her husband.

"Mrs. Rochestine—we have known each other for many years. I am conceited enough to imagine that you value me as a friend. I have something very serious to say to you; but, before I do, I must obtain your promise of leniency."

"What is it?" and the large black orbs turned on him.

"You are, now, a widow. I think you are a woman whose life is incomplete if passed alone. You are not one to wear the widow's weeds during the balance of your days. Tell me: do you think you will ever marry again?"

"That is a singular question, Mr. Paine—and at such a time!"



"Dead! Dead, did you say, mamma? No!—you don't mean it!"

"Not so singular, when considering how great the import of its answer is, to me."

Then, with a fervency he could no longer restrain, he continued, as he advanced to the side of her chair:

"Isabel Rochestine, let me say much in a few words. When I first met you, years ago, I felt as if there was but one woman on the earth who could make me happy—that one, yourself. But, ere I could tell you of this feeling, Horace Rochestine, through some arrangement between your family and his, snatched you away, as I then feared, forever. Since the day you became his wife, I have been a devoted friend to both; ay, have not my speeches, my actions, my looks told you, that, for you, there was a more than mere friendship in my heart? You are no longer a wife, but a widow—free! I heard you breathe the word, only a moment since. And all this is to tell you, Isabel, that I love you, worship you—ask you to consider my love. This is why I detained you. Look up at me: have I been too precipitate?—are you angry?"

We know that Isabel Rochestine loved this man. Hers was a passionate nature, when not checked by the rigid bit of "Society," and as he poured forth his confession, a hot fire seemed coursing in her veins, warming her whole frame.

Her face was crimson; something inaudible faltered from her lips.

"Isabel?"

"Mr. Paine!—Claude! do you—do you love me?"

"If I have not convinced you of it yet, I ask you to be my wife; and you shall see that I more than love you, by the attention I will ever pay to your slightest wish. Your answer, Isabel?"

With a quick movement, she threw her arms around his neck; and her face, with its blushing, its two soft gazing eyes and honeyed lips, was turned to his.

"Claude!—yes! I have loved you always. Have you not seen it? Though Horace could never say his wife was not all she should be, I have, still, tried in vain to

put out the tiny flame that burned in my heart for you. I am yours, Claude! Oh! do not say you love me, unless you mean it."

"Love is a word too weak, Isabel—idolize were better!"

It was strange to see this beautiful being in the embrace of a man who, till now, was kept from her by the holy relation of another—within the same hour that she learned of that other's death. If it was sinful to so easily forget the husband who, she was told, had died abroad, then there is but one excuse: the irresistible magnetism of love, and the power of its blisses to expel gloom.

"When you have laid aside your robes of mourning, Isabel, you will be my wife?"

"Yes. But," she seemed to suddenly remember something.

"But what?"

"You forget: I have a child. A man may love, Claude, but, I know that the truest of lovers, when they marry, hesitate to take more than the single object of their affection."

"You are right. And I am no exception. But, when we marry, I shall want to take you a long way from here—and, is it necessary for Pearl to go with us? She is not your own child; hence, it will not be so hard to part with her."

"Explain."

"Can we not send her to some boarding-school, or private establishment of learning?"

"True. I did not think of that."

"If you will leave it to me, I can manage it."

The door-bell rung at that juncture; but they heeded it not. The lovers were already rapt in each other, oblivious to all things save those thrills of joy which seemed to alternate between them, as they stood there, soul in soul and lip to lip.

But Isabel's quick ear detected a footstep in the adjoining *salon*; and in a moment she escaped his arms, and seated herself at the piano.

None too soon. A card was brought her.

It was left by the party who rung the bell, and who failed to gain admittance, through her recent order.

"Percy Wolfe," she read, aloud, from the card.

"Who is he?"

"I'm sure I don't know! I never met him, nor heard of him before," and the card was tossed carelessly on the piano.

"Yes, Claude, I will leave it all to you," Isabel said, presently.

"I do not think you ever loved Pearl overmuch."

"Oh! how can you say that? She is the child of my dead husband. Of course I love her!"

"Still you do not hesitate in leaving me to arrange for her future?"

"No, for I believe you will see that it is a comfortable arrangement. How soon will you be able to take her away?"

"At once."

"At once!" in surprise.

"Yes. You will find that I can fix matters speedily—in fact, Isabel, I ventured a little on the crisis of this hour, and have already taken steps."

"Pearl can go to-morrow. Had you not better call her in, and acquaint her with the plan?"

Pearl was summoned.

"Pearl," said her stepmother, when she came in, "this is Mr. Paine. You remember him, do you not?"

"Yes, I remember," shaking hands with him, and then retiring, shyly, to her mother's side.

"He has brought us bad news, pet—of your father."

"What is it, mamma? Why do you look so solemn? Has any thing happened?"

"My little girl," said Paine, gravely, "have you a stout heart?"

"I don't know; I've never had cause to try it yet. What's it all about, mamma?"

"Darling—your father is dead! We are all alone!" She spoke hushedly, and with emotion. Part of this was simulated—much was natural; for she was but a wo-

man, after all, and knew how deep, deep to the child's soul must cut those dread words.

The large blue eyes widened, as they turned from one to the other of the two; but Paine's glance, if any thing, was stern, and her mother's head was bowed.

"Dead! Dead, did you say, mamma? No!—you don't mean it!"

There was no answer.

Like a lily that has been smitten by the storm, Pearl bent under this terrible news. Her head drooped, and the lips quivered, as she struggled to keep down the threatening tears.

Young as she was, she knew the inestimable value of a father's love, and how hard to lose it; she had worshiped him as only a child could worship that one who, in every way, was a kind, indulgent parent.

"Dead!" she repeated, as if still doubting that she heard aright; and then she stood there, statue-like and silent, her bosom agonized with grief, her tongue powerless to speak more.

But a quick change came over her.

Suddenly she started forward, and winding her arms around her mother's neck, cried:

"Don't let us be too sad, mamma! We can't help it. Papa is happier in heaven than he would be here. 'See—I'm not crying now.'"

As Pearl had said, she was never before made to test the true strength of her nature; and now, in the moment of the ordeal, Claude Paine saw that it was one of iron.

"I am not weeping, pet; my heart is too full of woe, even for that. But I feel for you."

"Never mind me, mamma. Perhaps when I get by myself I shall have a sad time, but I'm strong now."

"Mr. Paine and I have been talking of your future, child," said Isabel, rather abruptly.

"My future?"

"Yes. Would you not like to go to boarding-school?"

"To boarding-school! Why, mamma, I have my governess here; can't she teach me well enough?"

"But I am going away."

"Where to?" asked Pearl, surprisedly.

"To California, where my uncle lives. And while I am gone, I had much rather see you at boarding-school, where you will be tenderly cared for."

"But why can't I go with you?"

"Impossible. Now, you must not be disobedient, Pearl, dear. Remember it is mamma's wish; and every thing is for your good."

"When am I to go?"

"To-morrow."

"So soon! And when are you going?"

"Very shortly."

"Oh, mamma, don't you go! It will be so lonesome for me. Why, I won't have anybody. Please don't go."

And the two dimpled arms clung tighter to her neck, as the child pleaded.

"There, there, Pearl; I'm sad enough as it is. Don't make me more miserable by acting this way. You'll do as I want you to."

For a second Pearl hesitated.

"Yes," came at last from the trembling lips.

Paine arose.

"I must bid you good-day now, Mrs. Rochestine. If Pearl will be ready by four p. m. to-morrow, I will call for her."

"She will be ready. Let me see you to the door."

At the door of the next *salon* the lovers parted. A passionate embrace, a kiss, and Claude Paine went out.

When he met his worthy associate that night on the Eastern Branch bridge, he had good cause for saying that he had progressed finely.

Pearl was standing where they had left her when her stepmother returned, with her fair head hung in sorrow, and one small hand resting on her bosom, as if to still the throbbings of a pained heart.

She did not notice Isabel; seemed oblivious to every thing but that great cloud which encompassed her—the first to darken her hitherto sunny life.

Isabel Rochestine swept past her, bestowing a side glance upon her, then stopped to repeat that glance ere she disappeared beyond the doorway.

### CHAPTER V.

#### DID SHE MURDER HIM?

We must, in order to develop an essential portion of our narrative, take the reader back a space, to London, to the house of Lord Chauncy, to that date when Herod Dean fell beneath the sword of the man who had proclaimed himself the affianced husband of Estelle Berkely, and her thirsty champion.

The nobleman's second, in the fatal duel, was his valet; and when his employer retired to an apartment in the upper story of the house, accompanied by the woman who retained his arm, he (the valet) discreetly withdrew from their presence.

Our two characters were soon seated in a luxuriously-furnished room, where brilliant lights blazed, and cast brilliant scintillations from the chandelier of quivering prisms.

The Englishman was a personage calculated to attract and repel, simultaneously—sufficiently handsome to engage attention, and hold the same by a peculiar power which lurked in his hard, piercing eyes; while his general appearance, once studied, was less than common.

Of his companion, little can be said:

save that, when she had thrown aside her shawl, and drawn a chair near to him, we see that she is glittering, from head to waist, in jewels; and, in form and feature, was rather stout, not what good taste admits to be beautiful—yet peculiarly voluptuous and attractive.

"I am rejoiced, my lord, to know that you escaped without even a scratch," she said; "I really feared for you, because I knew Herod Dean was no child in the use of a sword."

"True; he was no child. When I crossed weapons with him, I found a dangerous match. I am favored by fortune. Had it not been for his slipping, no doubt I would have fallen."

"Then I should now be miserable, Lord Chauncy."

"Why do you persist in addressing me with titles? Call me Hubert. One would think we had never even kissed—to say nothing of the fact that we are to be married soon!"

"Hubert, then—I can not imagine what you see in me, that you should wish to make me your wife."

"Till now, his eyes were bent upon the carpet; and she, with a glance that could but tell of craftiness, was regarding him covertly."

"He looked up quickly—to meet a face expressing simple inquiry, and of studied calmness."

"Every thing!" he exclaimed, impulsively; "every thing that a man, who is not cold to passion, must be attracted by! I know that your blood is as good as mine; I know that few women possess an intellect such as yours—and an educated woman is the rarest gem of earth—and, more than all, Estelle, your mirror must have told you how beautiful you are. Are not these enough?"

"I believe you do love me, Hubert."

"And you are not mistaken in that belief. Why should I offer to marry you?—why bequeath the most part of my wealth to you?—want to be always with you, if I did not love you?"

"Have you made such a will, Hubert?—when there are others, of your own kin, more deserving?"

"I am the judge of that, my queen."

"And, I suppose, the mysterious document is deposited in some wonderful hiding-place, etc., like what we read about; to be discovered in a romantic manner, eh?"

"It was artfully put, and the blinded lover did not suspect that the low, careless laugh which followed, was a piece of able acting."

"Oh, no; I only had it witnessed this afternoon. It is in my desk, in the library."

"She arose with an affected sigh."

"Ayho!—well—I must bid you good-night, Hubert; I am weary."

"Going without a kiss?" and he stepped toward her with outstretched arms.

"She presented her ripe, red mouth; and then, when he had held her to him for a second, she left him in solitude."

Alone in her boudoir, Estelle Berkely was an altered woman.

Her brown, flashing eyes lighted ominously, and a half-loud moaning broke from her false, hypocritical lips.

"So! he has made out his will? I must secure it, and my happy fate will, sometime, give me its benefits. But, I must not remain here. I have removed one eyesore, by skillful management; now I must flee from the other. Love him?—never! I could no more marry him than I could marry his cross-eyed valet! Let me secure the will—and then, adieu to England!"

"Madame is late retiring to-night."

Her little maid, a French girl with twinkling eyes and merry voice, had entered from the next room.

"Will madame disrobe?"

"Yes, Pifine; and hurry, for I am tired to death."

"Ah, ciel! it is awful to be tired to death. I will make haste," and she continued to chatter in a lively strain while she aided her mistress.

The following day was a marvel of beauty, with sunshine and warmth, and an atmosphere as clear and pure as a draught from the "starry goblets" of the Immortals.

Notwithstanding the small amount of repose he had obtained, Lord Chauncy was as fit as ten of the clock, and sent a message to his affianced, inviting her to a drive in an open barouche.

"She accepted, and they were soon speeding gayly over one of the fashionable courses, where others before them were enjoying the balmy air and invigorating scene."

"Ho, there! Lord Chauncy—hold!" called a voice, from a barouche that was whirling past.

The nobleman recognized one of his most intimate friends, and instantly ordered his driver to halt.

The other barouche turned, and was soon beside him.

"Lord Chauncy, delighted to see you!"

"The delight is mutual," cried Chauncy, grasping the extended hand. "When did you return?"

"Only last night. I have invitations out for dinner this afternoon at five. I was this morning, on my way to your house, and—ah! pardon my rudeness, Miss Berkely, raising his hat in a profound bow. "You, of course, will not deprive us of your presence at the party?"

"I venture she will accompany me," said Lord Chauncy, as he turned inquiringly to her.

"It is always a pleasure to me, to think that I can add to the harmony of a company, or make myself agreeable to those around me," was Estelle's reply, with a gracious smile.

"Rest assured, we can not enjoy ourselves without you!" he declared, gallantly. Then, in an undertone: "A splendid woman, Chauncy! You've got a jewel! Hurry up and marry her, before she slips away"—adding, aloud: "Au revoir! I shall expect you both."

Bowing again, he ordered his driver forward; while Chauncy, as he and Estelle were again moving along the smooth drive—watched by many who admired the flash of livery and shining equipage—sat thinking, in a splendid humor, of the compliment his friend had paid to the bride-elect.

Among all the ladies who graced the parlors at the house of Lord Chauncy's friend, that afternoon, none were as lovely as Estelle Berkely—none drew more attention, nor were the recipients of more gallant praise. With her beauty, she captivated; with her conversation, she doubled that captivation; and Lord Chauncy, not of a jealous nature, marked the exhibition of favor with growing pride—marked, also, the envious glances darted at his betrothed by those less beautiful than she.

But the nobleman withdrew at an early

hour, pleading fatigue; and—as in all things—was seconded by the voice of Estelle. They bade adieu to the assembled company, and were soon returning to their home.

Lord Chauncy's plea of fatigue was a truthful one; and, not long after reaching his house, he sought his couch to sleep. The occurrence of the night previous did not interfere with his rest.

The building was, in a short time, still as a tomb.

The hours slowly counted by. It was eleven.

Then the door of Estelle Berkely's boudoir might have been seen to open, and she, herself, issued noiselessly forth.

She was dressed in a complete traveling-suit, and carried a long, waxen candle, which she waved before and around her as she walked along the hall.

Anon she paused, and listened intently, as though in fear of some one lurking near to spy upon her movements. But no suspicious sound was audible in the household surrounding, and again she started forward on tip-toe, clutching the burnished holder with a firm, hard grip.

The library door was reached.

"Now to secure the will!"

She disappeared within, closing the door after her.

It was a long while ere she came out; and when she did come, she carried a large, significant document. It was Lord Chauncy's will.

She did not retrace her steps in the direction of her rooms, but turned to the broad stairway and began to descend.

Suddenly she paused, and suddenly the light fell from her hand and was extinguished; for something struck upon her ears that made her tremble, guiltily.

"Murder! Help!—help here! Murder!" rung, echoing, through the house.

It was the voice of Lord Chauncy's valet. The alarm came from that portion of the building where the nobleman slept; the words—terrible in import—roused the slumbering servants with a start of terror.

Where all was still and deserted was now life, noise and excitement. Lights flashed from room to room; men and women hurried forward to their employer's apartments, where the valet, on his knees, beside a bed, was weeping and moaning and wringing his hands in grief.

Lord Chauncy lay stark and stiff—to all appearances, a corpse. A thin, bluish line around his throat told the tale. He had been strangled!

And out upon the street a close carriage was speeding swiftly away.

Estelle Berkely sat, like a statue, amid the deep cushions of the vehicle, her hands clenched together, and teeth hard set—the sounds of alarm seeming to follow her, as she was borne onward, at terrific rate, to catch the midnight train for Liverpool.

## CHAPTER VI.

### PEARL'S TRUE FRIEND.

PEARL was alone in the parlor—a statue of beauty clothed in tears.

Poor child! It was hard for her to realize the unexpected news; and when, gradually, the full force of her grief asserted itself, it was to overwhelm her in a way words can not express.

A hallowed air seemed to close around her; a silence broken only by a low, painful sobbing—which, at last, she could no longer keep back—reigned in the gorgeous salon.

Then, after a long spell of weeping, her wet eyes raised to look at a large painting on the wall. One moment she checked the hot tears, that she might gaze upon the features of one who, she felt, she should see no more; and she sank to her knees, burying her face in her hands.

"Papa! Papa!" she wailed, tremulously. "Oh! why did you ever go away? Why have you left me all alone? Come back—come back to me!"

"Pearl, my child!" spoke a soft voice at her side.

She started, and looked up.

It was her governess who stood there—a young, sad-looking lady, with a calm, sweet expression of countenance, that had, long ago, brought Pearl to love her.

"What is it, Pearl? Tell me."

"Oh! Miss Byrne, I am so sad!—so sad!"

"What has happened?"

"Haven't you heard? Didn't mamma tell you?"

"I have not heard any thing."

"Papa!—dear, dear papa!—he—he's dead!" and a fresh burst of tears followed the speech from the quivering lips.

"Your father dead?" exclaimed Miss Byrne, and the accent was low and full of astonishment. "When did he die?"

Pearl had sprung to her feet, and pillowed her head on the other's bosom.

"I don't know; they only told me he was dead. That Mr. Paine told mamma. And, Miss Byrne—oh! Miss Byrne, they are going to send me off to boarding-school! I've got to leave you!"

"Going to send you away? How sudden all this is!" The last was muttered more to herself.

"Yes, yes," sobbed Pearl; "it's sudden, and it's unkind. Mamma is going to California; and now, when I want somebody to talk to, and comfort me, I'll be by myself, among strangers. I wish you could go with me!"

"When are you to leave?"

"To-morrow."

"To-morrow! I wonder why there is so much haste in getting you off?" The last again to herself.

"I don't know—I don't know. Oh! Miss Byrne, what shall I do?"

Pearl's face, upturned to hers, with its page of sorrow, touched a sympathetic chord in the soul of the kind governess, and awoke all the tenderest feeling in her womanly heart. She, too, began to weep, but it was in silence; and folding Pearl closer, she mingled her grief with the child's.

She had learned to love the young girl during the time she had been beneath Mrs. Rochestine's roof; and the affection was mutual. No wonder, then, that both were unhappy at the prospect of being separated; and it doubly augmented Pearl's woe, for, with father, mother, kind governess, all gone, and she taken from those scenes so endeared to her youthful fancy, life did, indeed, look desolate and bleak.

"What, what shall I do?" repeated the child, a question that was almost involuntary.

She had always looked to Miss Byrne for advice on those little matters which perplex the young; and it was but natural that she should do so now, upon a subject that was crushing her spirit to the earth.

"Be strong, Pearl," said Miss Byrne, in

reply; "be strong as you can. I once lost a father, who, I think, was kind to me as yours was to you. And when he died, I had none to go to, no one to shelter me from the world—for we were poor, and almost friendless. But, I knew there was a Father in Heaven who had ordained it, and to Him I turned for comfort. God must have given me strength, Pearl; for, whenever I prayed to Him, I felt less sad. And I began to hew out my own life, bearing my cross of trials with humility, and sustained by an unwavering faith in Jesus. Look up to Heaven, Pearl—the only true balm comes from there!"

In one accord, they sunk down to their knees.

And there, in the midst of luxury and pompous display, where it sounded strange, they solemnly heard a voice in prayer—Pearl's truest earthly friend prayed to their invisible Mediator—and to God!

A beautiful tableau! A picture as rare, in the palaces of the rich, as splendor is in chaos!

It was not long. But, for many seconds after the last whispering word was spoken, they remained motionless—as if a gentle influence from the skies was already pouring into their hearts.

The rustle of a dress recalled them to a sense of their surroundings.

Mrs. Rochestine had entered the parlor, and, as the two arose, she exclaimed:

"Miss Byrne—*you* here?"

"Yes, I was seeking Pearl, and found her in such sorrow, that, as a teacher of Truth, as well as other things, I felt it my duty to strive to comfort her."

"You forget; when you came here, I expressly stated that you were not to frequent this portion of the house."

"The rule, Mrs. Rochestine," returned the governess, quietly; "this is the first time, I believe, that I have intruded. I promised to read to your daughter to-day; and it was to keep my promise that I sought her. The servants seemed to have all gone off somewhere."

"Mamma, don't look so cross!" broke in Pearl, as she clung closer to Miss Byrne.

"Very well—say no more. You may retire now."

"And I am going with her, mamma."

Miss Byrne withdrew in silence, and Pearl accompanied her.

The stepmother gazed after the pair until they disappeared. Then she uttered, half-aloud:

"I don't want to be too severe with the child. She is nothing to me, it is true; yet she never did me harm. And they were praying together? Ah, me! it has been a long time since I prayed; I believe I have almost forgotten how."

"With a sigh, she crossed over to close the piano."

The card of her recent would-be visitor lay where she had thrown it.

She picked it up, and read the name again.

"'PERCY WOLFE.' Who can he be?—a perfect stranger?"

Miss Byrne was with Pearl constantly during the day; and at night she busied herself with arranging for the child's departure on the morrow.

There were two small trunks to be packed. Pearl carefully discriminated in the selection of their contents, while the governess placed every thing nicely to itself.

There was no bustle, excitement, hurrying to and fro, or noisy discussion upon what was most necessary to be taken; all was done in silence, with hardly an occasional whisper of inquiry or answer.

At bedtime the two knelt again. Another prayer went up to Heaven from the stillness of the room, where Pearl was to sleep for the last time; and then came the good-night kiss.

The calm, sweet voice of the governess had done much to soothe the aching wound of her charge, and, under the mild influence of her comforter's words, Pearl soon went to sleep.

It was a blessed respite, for the morrow was to bring a renewal of that stern realization of her utter loneliness, which had changed her from a buoyant sunny fairy, to a saddened child whose sensibilities were womanly.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 125.)

## Lightning Jo:

### OR, The Terror of the Santa Fe Trail.

#### A TALE OF THE PRESENT DAY.

BY CAPT. J. F. C. ADAMS,  
AUTHOR OF "THE PHANTOM PRINCESS; OR, NED HAZEL, THE BOY TRAPPER," "OLD GRIZZLY, THE BEAR TAMER," ETC., ETC.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### COMANCHE HONOR.

WITH the departure of Captain Shields and his party, Lightning Jo and Egbert Rodman set about the task of trailing the missing man, if such a proceeding lay within the range of human possibility.

There was something strange and mysterious in this failure upon the part of all to discover any trace of her or her horse. Had both or either of them been dead, this scarcely could have been the case. Every member of the party, excepting herself, had been accounted for, and was either buried in the quiet grave among the hills or else was within the stockade of Fort Adams, beyond the reach of the Comanches in the Southwest.

"Where can she be?"

This was the question that the two men put to each other and to themselves a score of times in as many minutes, and to which no satisfactory answer could be given. All was conjecture, and even that was of the most vague nature.

Lightning Jo had very little to say, but he was in deep thought as he moved morbidly about, with his eyes upon the ground, seeking out some clue by which he might take up the hunt for Lizzie; with some slight probability at least of success.

There were two facts which were constantly recurring to Egbert Rodman, and which caused him an apprehension positively tormenting. The Terror of the Prairie had been seen by himself and Lightning Jo but a few hours before, at no great distance from where they were standing at that moment, and he could not avoid connecting this with the disappearance of the maiden. Precisely in what way, it was hard for him to define, but he was convinced beyond a doubt that the two bore some relation to each other.

Furthermore, the declaration of Light-

ning Jo that the appearance of this nondescript boded coming calamity might be said to have been verified in the present instance; for quickly on the heels of its vanishment came the knowledge of the disappearance of Lizzie and the presence of Comanches in these hills, proving the closeness of the connection between the two.

The loss of the maiden to whom his heart clung with such yearning devotion was certainly the greatest calamity that had as yet befallen young Rodman, and he involuntarily shuddered as he recalled that awful ride down the canon, followed as it had been in the case of Lizzie by some after experience, that was all the more appalling to her friends, inasmuch as they knew nothing positive of its nature, and could only indulge in the wildest conjecture.

The only thing that afforded any thing like relief or consolation to the lover was the fact that he had the companionship and assistance of Lightning Jo in this search. Whatever was possible to be done for her rescue and safety by mortal man would be done by this wonderful scout, who was already busy making ready, and fully satisfying himself before he fairly started to work in the matter.

Every thing indicated that the two men could not remain long in these hills—for, aside from the fact that the demands of hunger could not be postponed for a much longer period, the probability began to present itself, that the girl was also gone from the vicinity.

"Do you not think it likely," inquired Egbert, when his comrade paused for a moment, "that when she emerged from the basin, as she did do, that she has managed to reach some hiding-place among the rocks, where she still remains—perhaps asleep?"

This possibility seemed to have been entertained already by the scout, who instantly shook his head in the negative.

"If she'd have done that, some of the boys would have come across her horse, for he would have managed to get himself into the company of the other mustangs, and would have been seen by them, in looking for the others."

"But there are our own animals yet; we have seen nothing of them."

"But the boys did; they told me they see'd 'em both, and I'll have my cipher in sight in less'n two minutes: see if I don't."

As he spoke, he uttered a low, quavering whistle, not very loud, but sufficiently so to be heard a distance of several hundred yards. Then pausing a moment he repeated the signal in precisely the same manner, and added, in his way:

"That animal will be here, if he's got forty Comanches trying to hold him."

"Only wish I could recover mine so easily," laughed Egbert, as the scout composedly sat down upon a large stone to await the coming of his faithful mustang, "but I am afraid Mahomet must go to the mountain in my case."

"When I parted company with mine last night, the understanding was that he was to go off and hunt a little something to eat on his own hook, and he expected to be told when I wanted him."

And knowing that he will obey like an obedient child."

"Exactly—there he comes this minute," replied Jo, as the tread of some animal was heard but a short distance away.

"Look out, Jo, that it is nothing else," warned Egbert, stepping back, so as to give the scout free room for whatever might come.

"I know his footstep," was the response to this, accompanied at the same time by a precautionary movement, consisting in the gentle raising the hammer of his rifle and bringing it to the front, where he could discharge it, if necessary, with the quickness of lightning, posing himself at the same time upon one foot, so as to be prepared to leap forward or backward as the case might be.

This precaution had scarcely been taken, when the mustang of Lightning Jo put in an appearance, accompanied by a Comanche Indian, who, sitting astride of the sagacious beast, was in blissful ignorance of whether he was being carried.

His position was the quiet one of ease and self-possession, showing that he had no thought of any impending danger. From this fancied security he was awakened by the sight of Lightning Jo, standing scarcely a dozen feet away, with his rifle pointed full at his breast.

The mustang at a word from his master stopped short, and thus the red-skin was brought face to face with the man, whom he recognized on the instant as the most deadly foe of the Comanche race.

"Get off that horse, you old galoot! he belongs to me. Slide mighty quick or I'll slide you!"

The substance of this was uttered in the Comanche tongue, so as to make sure of its being understood, and the action of the red-skin demonstrated that he had no difficulty in comprehending it on the instant; for he slid off the back of the mustang as suddenly and nimbly as if it had all at once become red-hot beneath him.

The savage held a long, beautiful rifle in his hand, and he was evidently on the alert, either for a chance to use it or to dodge away from his captor.

Had the circumstances been any different, the marvelous quickness of the copper-skin doubtless would have enabled him to accomplish his treacherous wish; but neither he nor any living Indian could play it off on Lightning Jo. If he thought he could, let him try it—that was all.

The scout wasn't particular whether he made the attempt or not, as there could be but one result; but the moment the Comanche's feet touched ground, he ordered him to approach within a half-dozen feet, and then drop his rifle to the earth.

The red-skin showed some reluctance in obeying this; but when he caught the glitter of the dark eye fixed upon him, he changed his mind and carried out the command with an amusing alacrity.

"Where are the rest of you devils?" was the first rather pointed inquiry, uttered also in the Comanche tongue, and with the muzzle of the rifle pointed threateningly at the breast of the savage, who replied, with a gesture peculiarly his own:

"There are but a few among the hills—no more than so many (holding up the fingers of one hand); they are hunting for food; they will soon take their departure to join their brother-hunters far to the south."

It would be a thundering sight better if they'd all join each other down below," was the conclusion of Jo, who continued his cross-examination:

"Have any gone away in the night? Did any of the Comanches depart before daybreak?"

"No; there were none here."

The slight hesitancy, a certain peculiarity that accompanied this reply, convinced Jo, on the instant, that the Indian was telling a downright falsehood, and that, after all, he was gaining a slight clue to the trail of the missing maiden.

His conclusion was that there were a few Indians among the hills, but that the greater majority had left before daybreak. Precisely why they had done so was more than he could understand; but their departure unquestionably had something to do with the disappearance of Lizzie Manning.

Jo was rather drunk in his questioning, for the next was the pointed demand:

"Tell me where the great chief, Swico Cheque, is; I want to raise his hair."

The look that crossed the copper face of the savage said as plainly as words could have done, that he would have been extremely delighted to see the scout attempt such a thing.

"I don't know where he is," he replied, without any embarrassment in his manner; "he went away before the light came."

"There it was! the incautious Indian had let it out after all. Swico Cheque had taken his departure with the band that went off in the stillness of the night."

The red-skin seemed entirely unaware of the slip he had made, and awaited the further questioning of his captor as the heroic martyr awaits the creeping up of the consuming blaze.

"I don't know as I want any thing more of you," remarked the scout, "so I guess you can travel. It would be hardly the thing to scalp you after I took you prisoner, though I'm sure you deserve it."

This order was unexpected and surprising to the Indian, who stared a moment, as if uncertain that he had heard aright.

"Come, light out of this, old greaser!" added Jo, the next instant.

This was all-sufficient. The Comanche stooped down, and picking up his rifle, turned about with a certain dignity and walked slowly away, disdain to run, although no doubt anxious to get out of that immediate neighborhood with as little delay as possible.

Once only he threw a shadowy

## The Artist's Model.

BY COL. FREESTON INGRAHAM.

"Must we part forever, Nita?"

"Yes, Vernon, I fear it must be so; I would not marry you without my parents' consent, and were I to do so, you know we would both be too poor to sustain ourselves."

"Be it so, my darling; I will not drag you down from the luxury of wealth to the bitterness of poverty."

"Oh, Vernon! poverty would be sweetened by the thought of you; now my life is a bitter-sweet. You know how I love you, and yet you know how I love to my parents the duty of obedience, and therefore we must part."

"And forever, Nita?"

"Yes, I fear so. Father is determined that we shall never meet again, and he is also determined that I shall marry the Count de Valderna."

"Curse it! No, I will not be bitter—I will not cast a darker cloud upon you; but, oh, Nita, if I could only call you mine own, if you were only my wife, how hard would I struggle for fame; for fame would bring me money, and money is all I want now to claim your hand."

"Hush, Vernon—do not speak thus. I know my father's mercenary disposition will sacrifice me; but I am resigned. Now, farewell, and let your lonely hours of toil be cheered by the thought that I love you."

And thus they parted—Nita Lambert to return to her palatial home, in one of the grand avenues of the great American metropolis, and Vernon St. Verta to struggle on in his studio, through many following days of poverty and toil.

Nita Lambert was the only child of wealthy New York parents, and her idol; they were determined that she should make a brilliant marriage.

Seeing a lovely painting, the likeness of one of Nita's schoolmates, Mr. Lambert had inquired the address of the artist, and taken his daughter with him to the humble studio, determined to have her sit for a portrait.

An impoverished Southerner, but boasting a noble lineage, Vernon St. Verta had determined to devote himself to art as a profession.

Possessing wonderful talent, he was assured that the future would realize his brightest anticipations, and at the time of Mr. Lambert's and Nita's visit he was gradually struggling into success.

It was during the long sittings for the portrait that the artist had learned to love Nita, and most sincerely did she return his love; but a cloud came upon their hopes, their bright horizon was cast in gloom, and banished from the house by Mr. Lambert, the lovers were forced to part—perhaps forever.

Nita Lambert married the Count de Valderna, and accompanied her aged and noble husband to his Italian home.

Vernon St. Verta felt deeply the wound inflicted upon him, but bore up bravely, and day after day found him at his easel.

Three years passed, and he had laid up sufficient to enable him to go to Europe, and in foreign halls of art study hard to rise higher up the ladder of fame, and gradually success attended his efforts.

Toward the close of a sultry August day, fifteen years after his departure from America, Vernon St. Verta sat at work in his spacious and comfortable studio in Rome.

A tap at the door startled him, and to his summons to enter, an old woman stood before him.

Her face was sharp and disagreeable, and marks of ill-governed passion rested upon her features.

"To what am I indebted for this visit?" asked the artist, facing her.

"You wish a model—one who has a face of beauty and a wealth of golden hair?" interrogatively answered the woman.

"I do; but you will hardly—"

"Do not insult me! I know I am a haggard, but I have a child, a lovely girl, who will suit you; that is, if you pay well."

"I will pay well for a model such as I wish. Send her to me, and if she suits, call I will give you your price."

"It is well; I will at once send her," and without more being said, the woman left the studio.

Thirty-eight years had fallen lightly upon Vernon St. Verta, and excepting a few straggling hairs of silver upon his temples, few would have believed him by eight years as old.

A handsome man he certainly was, and the shadow of sadness that lingered in his earnest eyes and firm mouth added another charm to his face.

For some moments he sat and mused after the woman's departure, and was lost in deep thought, when the door again sounded under a gentle knock, and the model stood before the artist. With a bound he was upon his feet, his eyes staring, as he exclaimed:

"Does the grave give up its dead? Pardon me, please, but give me your name."

The maiden stood for a moment undecided, her beautiful face half-startled by the artist's manner, her graceful form drooping, and waves of golden hair falling around her. Apparently seventeen years of age, she was indeed a lovely picture, and in admiration Vernon St. Verta gazed upon her, until she replied, softly:

"My name is Nita Valderna, sir."

"Nita Valderna—your mother was a Miss Nita Lambert of New York, and married the so-called Count de Valderna?" asked the artist, quickly.

"Yes, sir—my father imposed upon my mother; he was not a nobleman, but—a renegade priest—he brought my mother to Italy, and here we lived until my father was killed in a street broil; my mother soon after died of a broken heart, for her parents had cast her off."

"Yes, their nature would prompt such an act. Go on, please, I am deeply interested."

"After mother's death, Mr. Valderna's aunt took charge of me, and for the past two years I have been her slave."

"And shall never return, my child! I have a stronger claim upon you: listen! I have a mother, and of the love that her mother and himself had felt for each other: of their cruel separation, of his struggles with the world, his grief when he heard of the death of the only woman he had ever loved, and last of all, of the fame he had won as the greatest of American artists."

Then he told her that she would no more return to her cruel guardian, but be his adopted daughter, and willingly the young girl accepted the kind offer of her mother's friend, and Vernon St. Verta became her guardian.

friend, and Vernon St. Verta became her guardian.

Three years after the famous artist and his model were married, for Nita had learned to love her benefactor with all the power of her nature, and upon the young girl Vernon St. Verta had bestowed the pure affection he had felt for her mother, and now in their handsome home in New York they are living in true happiness.

Tracked to Death:  
THE LAST SHOT.BY CAPT. MAYNE REID,  
AUTHOR OF "HELPLESS HAND," "LONE RANCHER,"  
"SCALP HUNTERS," "WHITE CHIEF," ETC.

## CHAPTER C.

## FRIENDS AND FOES.

As Clancy caught sight of the cavalcade he drew his horse behind the rock, directing Jupiter to do the same.

This screamed, they could see the approaching troop without being seen.

Was it approaching? This was a question to be at once determined. If it was, their only hope of safety would be in the swiftness of their horses, for the rock would only conceal them till the robbers rode up to it.

In both animals they had confidence. Clancy in his own, while the steed late ridden by the outlaw was also an American horse, not likely to be overtaken by Texan steeds.

They were now in the same sort of dilemma as when Jupiter bestrode the mule. Still would there be danger if the enemy came that way. There might be horses in the troop swift as theirs; for, as they knew, not all of them were mustangs.

For better concealment they dismounted, Jupiter holding the horses, while Clancy fixed his eyes upon the robber-band, taking care that as much of his head as must needs be shown should appear to be but a jutting part of the bowlder. A blanket, hastily plucked from Darke's saddle-croup, enabled him thus to simulate.

Only for a short while was he in doubt about the direction in which the horsemen were proceeding.

They were not riding toward the rock, but in a direct line for the ridge—at right angles, as if intending to cross it. They appeared to be heading straight for the tree, going on, no doubt, to the place he had such reason to remember.

He breathed freely. Unless something should cause them to deflect from their line of march, he need be under no immediate apprehension. But he could not help reflecting on what would have been his fate had he been still in the prairie stocks!

That he was not there was something for which to be thankful.

While congratulating himself, he for a moment removed his glance from the robber-band, directing it to the opposite side—to his right. As he did so there came a flash across his face and a glitter into his eyes, for a time obscuring his vision. When it became clear again, he saw what drew from him an ejaculation of joy, his companion echoing it.

Another cavalcade was upon the plain, advancing toward the ridge, in a direction diametrically opposite to that pursued by the robbers.

The two troops were about equidistant from the summit, the true being evidently the guiding-point of both. The swell between hindered them from seeing one another, while Clancy, from his commanding position, had a full view of both.

His joyful exclamation had sprung from the thought that the second troop was composed of the pursuing colonists. It was quickly followed by another proclaiming his certainty of this. For at its head was one riding a horse of a color not common. It was a brindled "daybank," with stripes resembling those upon a half-bred zebra. Simeon Woodley's horse had such markings. It must be the backwoodsman who headed the party approaching from the right.

Both cohorts were advancing at a like rate of speed—not very rapidly, their horses but going on a brisk walk. But if this continued a collision was inevitable.

It was evident they knew nothing of one another, had no suspicions of their mutual proximity.

On recovering from his short and joyful surprise Clancy saw how things stood. A glance to right and left enabled him to recognize on the one side friends, on the other foes. And his glance gladdened as he measured the strength of the two parties—saw that the former was by far the stronger.

There were nearly thirty of them, while of the robber-band he could count only twenty. At the same time he was aware that most of these were desperadoes, who would fight to the death, knowing that, if taken a halter would be their doom. But among the colonists were also many brave men, and they were led by one of the bravest, Simeon Woodley. They had God, too, on their side; while the brigands would be doing battle under the banner of the Devil.

He had no anxiety about the result of an encounter. His only apprehension was that it might not come off. Something might occur to warn the robbers, and give them a chance to slum it. They would be certain to retreat at sight of that enemy stronger than they, and with right upon its side.

If the two troops should only ride near enough, he had confidence in the superior speed of the long-legged American horses. But as yet nearly three miles lay between, and this was too much. A word of warning—a sign to make them suspicious—and the scoundrels might escape.

Was there any?

He looked to right, to left, between them. There was nothing upon the plain.

But something above it—buzzards!

There were two flocks, one over each band of horsemen, accompanying it on its march. These foul birds always do so, their instinct admonishing them that where there are two parties of armed men they may look for a collision between them. They even know when these are hostile and likely to spill one another's blood.

Borlase could not fail to see those soaring over the colonists, the flock flying above the brigands. On each side what would be the conjecture? This was the question Clancy asked of himself.

Borlase would suppose the flock afar was above the head of him he had left implanted in the prairie. Woodley would, no doubt, have a fancy—at the same time a fear—that those he saw in the air were

about to descend upon a dead body—that of his old comrade. And there might be two, for the backwoodsman would take Jupiter into account.

It was just as Clancy conjectured. Woodley, from one side, observed a flock of vultures, distinct from that wheeling over his head. Borlase, from the opposite, observed another flock, having no connection with those soaring above him. Both interpreted the sign as too insignificant to cause a halt, and each moved on at the head of his following.

"Thank the Lord!" said Clancy, relieved from all further fear. "They must meet now!"

## CHAPTER CI.

## AWAITING THE COLLISION.

With heart audibly beating, Clancy watches the opposing cohorts as they approach one another. He has no intention to be an idle spectator of the conflict that must soon ensue. On the contrary, he pants to take part in it; to assist in smiting and crushing the criminal crew; to punish their leader for the outrage recently endured at his hands—for the misery that almost made him mad.

He is prepared to start forth—Jupiter, by his direction, holding the horses in readiness. But the moment has not yet arrived. He must not show himself too soon. Man or horse, appearing in such a place, would excite the suspicions of the pirates, cause them to halt, perhaps to ride off in retreat.

They are not yet near enough to insure the encounter. By showing himself he might give them a chance to slum it. This must not be; and he remains behind the rock, with quick-beating pulse, alternately glancing from one troop to the other.

Oh, if he could but whisper in Simeon Woodley's ear, or make sign to him! But one word or gesture to warn him of what was advancing on the other side!

Is there no way to communicate with the colonists without exciting the suspicions of the pirates? Can he steal back behind the ridge, and join the former before they advance to its summit?

He looks around, and scans the ground to his rear, with his eye calculating its incline.

Impossible. To retreat from the rock would at once discover him to both bands—to the robbers first!

He may not move one inch. He must wait for his cue, which will be when they sight one another.

Stay! A thought strikes him—he thinks of a decoy. His eye rests upon the dead body of Darke. He scans the Indian costumes still adhering to it. Darke's horse is beside him.

Suppose he make use of the dress and the steed, for a time counterfeiting his now lifeless foeman? The plumed coronet and conspicuous savage trappings will enable him to do it. So disguised, he can show himself to the robber band, without fear of their sheering off.

Shall he try the ruse? It is a question of time. Will there be sufficient for him to accomplish it?

He glances at the two troops; again measuring the distance between, and taking note of the rate of speed.

Too late to attempt the travestie now! He might be caught in the act of preparing for it.

He abandons the idea, and resigns himself to his original intent.

Curbing his impatience as he best can, he continues to watch the mutually approaching parties. Neither is making rapid advance. The slope, growing steeper as they ascend toward the summit, is cause for them to spare their horses. But it can not be long before they are face to face.

Neither marches in any order. Both are clumped irregularly—the leaders a little ahead. A tortoise with neck extended would in shape symbolize their formation. They might be compared to two dark clouds, sailing toward one another through a clear sky, both highly charged with hostile electricity. When they come in collision surely will the red rain fall!

Up the opposing slopes they continue to advance, still suspicious, each of the other. The terrain resembles the roof of a house pitched at an oblique angle. Clancy's position is that of a man placed upon the ridge, behind a chimney; while the two squadrons are ascending from the eaves. The solitary tree represents another chimney, toward which they are tending. But before reaching it both will abruptly discontinue their ascent.

His heart bounding within his breast, his blood coursing hot through his veins, his pulse beating quicker than ever, he watches and waits, impatiently timing the crisis.

It is near at hand. The two flocks of vultures have met in mid-air, and mingle their flight in sweeping gyrations. They seem jubilant, as if anticipating a repast!

Clancy measures the moments; they will be few and short now. The crowns of the horsemen rising against the horizon, already align with the tufts of grass growing topmost upon the ridge. Now their brows are above it; now their eyes; they have sighted each other!

It is Clancy's cue. He cries out, "My horse, Jupiter! Mount, and follow me!"

He grasps the bridle; vaults into the saddle; then, like a thunderbolt, shoots out from the rock, and on along the ridge.

A halt, as the hostile cohorts catch sight of one another; horses hurriedly pulled up. No shout; only a word of caution from their leaders, each calling back to his own men. Then an interval of profound silence, broken only by the shrill neighing of the horses and the clattering of hoofs; this where he himself gallops over the plain.

Both see him now, without taking note. They are too intent on scanning each other. The scrutiny is confined to the headmost men, the others still mutually screened by the interposed swell of the ground. And there are still several hundred yards of space between them.

But each knows the other to be an enemy; and, despite the distance, the two herculean leaders recognize one another—Woodley Borlase, and Borlase Woodley.

The recognition is simultaneous; and after it the silence ceases. From the throat of the backwoodsman issues a shout that peals afar over the plain. It is a cry of vengeful determination, quickly followed by the words "Come on!"

Borlase, too, utters a cry; but of very different meaning. It is the screech of a man who perceives himself in danger, and has in it the tone of retreat.

In another instant both troops are going at full gallop. But not toward each other. One is pursuing, the other pursued. The robbers are in retreat!

(To be continued—commenced in No. 97.)

"Now," said the scout, "prove whether your eyes are good for anything. Take a look round the horizon and tell me what you can see."

Suspecting the object of all this, Egbert did as requested, scanning the boundary line of his vision, with careful intensity, like the shipwrecked mariner searching for land. Off to the northward, just within range of sight, he could make out Captain Shields and his companions on their way to Fort Adams, but to the east and south nothing but the undulating plain itself could be seen devoid of all signs of life.

Glancing at Jo, he saw that he was looking off to the westward, with an attentive, searching look that indicated something; and, as he did not remove his gaze from that point, Egbert initiated him, straining his vision to the utmost.

The young man had looked but a moment, when he detected a party of horsemen moving in a southwesterly direction. They were so far away that it was impossible to identify them; but there was scarcely a doubt of their being Indians, and most probably the very ones for whom Lightning Jo was searching. His manner indicated as much.

Had this been the first attempt with Egbert to use his sight in the manner described, he probably would have failed to see the horsemen altogether; but his short experience in crossing the plains since leaving St. Louis assisted him.

"Well, you see them, do you?" was the question of Jo, as he looked around and started to move away. "I s'pose you know 'em, too?"

"I suspect that they are Indians; but I conclude that not from any certain knowledge of my own, but simply infer it."

"Yes, there're the Comanches that left the hills before daylight. Swico Cheque, the biggest red devil that walks the earth, is at their head. He's got enough of butting his head ag'in' United States soldiers, and he's off to recruit his band."

"But what of her—of Lizzie?" asked Egbert, in a trembling voice, dreading to hear the answer that he was almost sure would come.

"Why, she's with him, of course. He'll keep her till he gets tired of her, and then he'll have some more fringe for his hunting-shirt."

These words were uttered in the very desperation of vengeance, and the scout wheeled about with a spiteful air, and exclaimed:

"Stay here till I come back! If you see any of the infernal copper-skinned, bore a hole through 'em. If you see anybody, break his head! Look out for yourself! Keep cautious, and rest easy till I come back. I won't be gone long."

And with this rather contradictory advice, Lightning Jo wheeled about, plunged down the hill, and was gone almost on the instant.

"Jo is in a dangerous mood," concluded Egbert, as he gazed after him; "he feels ugly, and he'll do something terrible if he gets the chance."

The young man turned his face to the westward, where he had caught the glimpse of the departing Indians, and there was a strange, sad pleasure in the thought that, probably, he was gazing at the scout, but the latter was the beloved of his heart—perhaps at the fair, sweet maiden herself—going further and further away each moment, and looking longingly back at the hills where she had been so cruelly separated from him to whom, with Lightning Jo, under heaven, she must look for help.

But this had lasted scarcely a minute when it was over. The party had vanished from view entirely, and no straining of the vision could make them out again. They were gone; was he ever to see them or her again?

He had barely time for the passage of such a thought when the near crack of a rifle broke the stillness, and he started and looked around, thinking that, perhaps, some other treacherous Comanche had stolen up and sent a bullet after him; but he could see nothing, and he concluded that Lightning Jo had something to do with the discharge of the gun, as, indeed, it seemed to have a certain familiar sound.

But little time was given him for speculation when the scout himself put in an appearance.

"Come, Roddy," said he. "I've found your horse; we're ready now; and there's no use in waiting longer."

"Where did you find him?" asked Egbert, not a little surprised and delighted at the unexpected news.

"There was a red-skin on him; he ain't there now, and I guess won't bother us more."

Jo's account of how he recovered the animal was very clear and direct, but it was not so clear as to what became of the Indian who had been astride of him.

Sure enough, a few rods away, the identical steed which Egbert had ridden from Dead Man's Gulch was found secured to a bush, and, leaping upon his back, required but a few minutes for the two comrades to reach the spot where the faithful mustang of Lightning Jo was awaiting the return of his master. He gave a faint whinny of pleasure as he caught sight of the scout, but the latter, by a simple motion of the hand, checked it on the instant, the sagacious creature seeming to understand at once that he must suppress all expression of his emotions, the same as bipeds.

"Now, let us get out of this infernal place," added the scout, as the two reined up their animals, side by side. "I think there's some five or six of the copper-skinned here, but they're over near the other end of the hills, and seem to be acting as though they were waiting for some larger company. I don't believe they don't know nothing about us; so we needn't give 'em a thought."

"Whither do we direct our course?" asked Egbert.

"Straight after them devils, and we're never to stop till we hold catch up with Swico, and him and me square up our accounts."

A little care and patience, and in a few minutes the two horsemen found themselves upon the edge of the prairie, and they headed due west, straight in the path taken by Swico Cheque and his band, and the mustangs were instantly put to a full run.

Now came a long, swift, but tedious ride, the particulars of which it is hardly necessary to give. The day became very warm, and the prairie for a long distance was almost devoid of vegetation; the hoofs of the galloping steeds throwing up dust at every step. But Lightning Jo was like a pilot sailing over a bay that he had known from childhood; and great as was his impatience to reach his goal, he was too prudent a horseman to tax his steeds beyond their strength; and when they showed unmistakable signs of wear-

ness, he diverged from the trail he had been following, and made his way to some timber, where the animals were enabled to procure both water and grass, while Egbert, faint and weak, more from his long abstinence from food than from his long, hot ride, threw himself at full length upon the grass, totally exhausted and scarcely able to stand.

"I could keep it up for several days," remarked Jo, as he looked attentively at him, "but you're at the end of your tether, and must have food; so lay still and rest yourself, while I see whether I can scare up anything to put under your jacket."

"Don't do it," protested Egbert, rising to the sitting position, "if it will make any delay, I will soon regain my strength."

But the scout had a fashion of disregarding advice when it went contrary to his own ideas, and he took himself off on the instant in quest of game, which he knew was very scarce in this neighborhood. He was gone about half an hour, when he came back with the announcement that he had not succeeded in finding any thing at all, after a thorough search. He had even examined several pools in the brook, in his hunt for fish, but with no success at all.

"Never mind," he said, cheerily, "we'll strike something after night, if you can stand it till then. How is it with you?"

"I feel as strong as ever," replied the young man. "Let us mount at once, without any more delay."

"Take a good swig of water first, and if you find yourself getting thirsty, chew up a bullet and it will help you some. Come on."

Once more they were within the saddles, with their mustangs thundering forward with renewed strength, and at a gallop that must surely bring them up rapidly to the Comanches, unless, of course, the latter were proceeding at the same tremendous rate—a supposition that was hardly plausible under the circumstances, as Lightning Jo was emphatic in his declaration that the chieftain knew nothing of this quixotic pursuit, and if he did, he was not likely to concern himself about it, when he had such a band of the bravest rangers of the prairie at his back.

As yet they had not got a glimpse of the red-skins, although the scout was positive that they were gaining rapidly upon them, and were really at no great distance. This was due principally to the broken character of the ground, which shut off any extended views, and which made it possible to approach within a half-mile of their enemies, without either party discerning each other. Jo left the trail several times, but at intervals he came back to it, so as to prevent time being lost by any search that he might be forced to make in order to take it up again.

A most timely piece of good fortune awaited them. About the middle of the forenoon, when the heroic Egbert felt that he was taxing himself beyond his strength, they struck a deserted camp, where a party of United States cavalry, ranging through the country upon a scout, had spent the previous night. Here were found the remains and fragments of their meals scattered all about, and it gave to both, who they so much needed—a nourishing substantial meal, that made a new man of Egbert.

"Now," said he, straightening up like a giant refreshed with new wine, "I am ready for anything, I don't care what it is."

"I think you'll get enough of it afore long," was the significant reply of Lightning Jo, adding, "we're close onto the copper-skinned, and if I ain't mistook more than I ever was in my life, we'll strike their camp inside of an hour."

This was startling news, but was singularly verified, for scarcely a half-hour had passed when the scout, who was riding a short distance in advance, ascended a small swell of the prairie and almost the instant he reached the top, wheeled his mustang about and galloped back again, motioning to Egbert to do the same.

"We've reached their camp," he said, in explanation; "and if the gal is there, there's going to be the thunderingest scrimmage you ever heard told of. If there isn't any other way to do, I'm going to sail in and attack the whole caboodle alone. I tell you, Roddy, I feel just as though it would do me good to lay out a dozen or twenty of those red devils, and if I can get a chance at that head imp, you'll never see me ag'in till I've buried my knife to the hilt in his black heart!"

"You mustn't attempt any such mad scheme as that of attacking them alone," protested Egbert, alarmed at the strange glitter in the eye of his friend. "I know you can do more of that business than any man living; but you are mortal, and know what sort of fighters those Comanches are. Just get in among them where they can use their knives and guns upon you, and you'll be a dead man in ten minutes. I don't care for myself, but you can understand what the fate of Lizzie will be after that."

A strange smile darkened rather than lit the face of the scout, as he sprang down from his horse.

"You don't know one half of what I have passed through. If the gal is there, you s'pose there's anything short of the hand of Heaven that's going to keep her out of my clutches? If you do, just wait and see."

And cautioning the bewildered man to resist every temptation to stir a foot from the spot until his return, the scout moved up the prairie-swell again. Egbert saw him crouch down like a panther about to leap upon its prey, and then he vanished from view as noiselessly as a shadow, leaving the lover to the trying task of waiting, fearing, hoping, watching, listening, and to despair.

Lightning Jo passed down the opposite side of the swell, and, as was his custom in reconnoitering the camp of a foe, he made a circuitous route by a small cluster of stunted trees, which struck him as offering the very shelter he so much needed.

He had no thought of any of his foes being here, but he had scarcely approached the margin when he became certain that he was close upon one or more of them.

In his stealthy manner he insinuated himself among the trees, and the next instant was greeted with the sight of the great Comanche chieftain, Swico Cheque, reclining upon the ground in a sound slumber!

(To be continued—commenced in No. 121.)

A WRITER once heard a speech delivered before a company of newshoppers and bootblacks, as follows: "My dear children, you should be good because it is so good to be good; you should not be bad because it is so bad to be bad. If you are good, you will feel as good as I do; if you are bad, you will feel as bad as you do."

## Saturday Journal

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### Whittaker's New Story!

As already announced we shall give, in the next issue of the SATURDAY JOURNAL, the opening chapters of

### DOUBLE DEATH: OR, THE SPY QUEEN.

BY FREDERICK WHITTAKER,  
AUTHOR OF "THE RED RAZOR," "THE KNIGHT OF THE RUBIES," ETC., ETC.

Soldierly devotion, loyalty, treason, personal wrong, woman's love, hate and faith—all are deeply involved in this truly noble story of the old war for Independence; and we are brought face to face with Washington; Benedict Arnold; Margaret Montross, the fierce Indian Queen; Andre; Clinton; Margaret Shippen, (Arnold's wife), and other noted characters of the seven years' struggle. The action is centered around one of Arnold's aids—a young man loyal to the core amid every temptation—a young English woman of great brilliancy, beauty and bravery, who assumes the

Startling Service of a British Spy, and by her extraordinary performances and power, even over the Six Nation Indians, wins the sobriquet of the SPY QUEEN. The blood-stained Mehaska, Queen of the Senecas, bows to the authority of this Spy Queen, whom Sir Henry Clinton makes his confidant as well as his secret messenger. It is she who lures Benedict Arnold on to his stupendous crime against Liberty, and who scorns him for his treason while she plots unflinchingly to win his aide-de-camp's hand and heart. To these schemers comes as a foil and irrepressible foe,

**DOUBLE DEATH, THE IRISH CHAMPION OF LIBERTY,** a simple trooper and scout, brave as a lion, faithful as a friend, relentless as an enemy, whose very reckless disregard of danger renders him a terror to the Red-Coats and their savage allies, and a marplot to the vile schemes of the great traitor.

The romance is exceedingly spirited in its narrative style, and in action is so vividly real as to render its interest deeply absorbing. From the first to its last chapter it holds the reader's attention like a spell, and will be, to all classes, one of the

**MOST DELIGHTFUL LITERARY TREATS** which has been presented for a long time, to the public, through the popular weekly press.

### Our Arm-Chair.

Chat.—A young man asks us "If we approve the modern systems of education?" We hardly know what he means. In fact there is no longer any system to education. Once there was. Only one generation ago the "College Course" was as fixed as a mathematical problem. The preparatory course was equally established. But now all is changed. The old college course of so much Greek, Latin, Mathematics and Natural Science is all broken up into fragments, and almost every college has had to adopt the principle of letting its students pursue any chosen line of study. Greek may be thrown overboard for German, and Latin made to give way for French or Choctaw. A young man having a taste for bugs can become a "buggist," and every possible ail will be given him. He can study mathematics to the total exclusion of modern or ancient languages, or can study the languages to the neglect of mathematics. So of the Natural Sciences, of Law, of Metaphysics, of Practical and applied Science, of Music, Art—all are taught as specialties in our best institutions, and no student is now compelled to study what he deems to be unessential to his life success. If it is this want of system in education that our correspondent refers to, we may say, we most heartily approve of it.

In answer to "Six Young Men of Pittsburg," we say: No doubt can be raised regarding one fact—that all the professions are greatly overstocked. If the avenues of commerce can be said to be choked with applicants for places and employ, the professions of law, medicine and politics may be declared to be d—no, jammed, literally, with the superfluity of young men ambitious for fortune, fame and fast living. As a consequence, a great many qualified men are wasting years of vigorous life in a struggle against great odds, in which the weak must go down, and their generation is neither the wiser nor the better for their living. Year by year this number of contestants increases, until it would seem as if all the world must "go to law," or must be made sick, or must multiply offices infinitely, to give this eager crowd a chance for "a living." With this knowledge before you, young men, we certainly do not advise you to study for any one of the "liberal professions"—no, not even if you are able to live years without much income. Far better enter some avenue of labor where your brains and muscles will be honorably taxed, and where your usefulness will be confessed. All honest labor is honorable, and he who shirks it is not

a man to put faith in, nor will his generation seek to do him honor.

—The number of people who have gone abroad, or are preparing to go, is enormously great. Every one of the six or seven lines of foreign steamers, running to Europe from New York, goes crowded, and has done so for several months. Most of these persons go less to sight see and to obtain information than to enjoy the excitement of the foreign capitals. They simply have money to spend and think it "so much nicer" to spend it in Europe than in their own country. It is estimated that not less than sixty thousand Americans are now in Europe—each of whom will average in expenditures three thousand dollars, making eighteen million dollars withdrawn from our current coin resource! So great, indeed, is this drain that, were it not for the money brought into our land by immigrants, we would feel the monetary pressure severely. Only a country of unbounded resources and recuperative powers could sustain such a drain as we are now undergoing, and bid fair to undergo, for some time to come. Oh, that Americans could be induced to believe our country as entitled to their first consideration when they have time to waste and money to spend!

### DON'T GO BEYOND YOUR MEANS.

It is hard to be obliged to pinch and plan and practice all sorts of petty economies, not to say privations, in making both ends meet.

It is hard to make a five-dollar bill stop the leak in household expenses which needs a twenty to fill; to eke shoes and frocks for the little ones out of the meager supply of market money, rather than call forth from the harassed head of the family:

"More new clothes for the babies? why, bless me, Jane, I gave you a dollar only last week for them. We must be saving, my dear!"

Saving! Does the man know the meaning of the word, I wonder? He has his little pet habits, which he never thinks of curtailing, which eat into the common fund in a measure that would supply the woeful wants that the utmost planning will not always bridge over; he brings home a friend to dinner every day or so, and knowing the straitened condition of home finances, orders expensive luxuries from an up-town establishment, with a corresponding bill to be footed at the end of the month; he indulges recklessly in linen neckties and paper collars because they are cheap, without reckoning the sum to which they amount in the course of a quarter; he gets new boots if he needs them, and never dreams that his wife has renounced crinoline and adopted straight skirts because of the shabby gaiters, which brushing and mending now fail to make presentable.

Yet, notwithstanding all the discomforts of living within an insufficient income, it is infinitely preferable to accumulating debts with no reliable means of meeting them. Fifty dollars out in the shape of petty bills will prove a mill-stone about a poor man's neck. Superhuman efforts may keep him afloat, but he will never make any headway with that weight dragging upon him. Better to deny one's self those dishes of early fruits which cost double and relish one-half as well as a little later in the season, than to lose an hour's sleep in worry over lacking half-dollars in the week's accounts. Better to get the little ones, stout, serviceable clothing, which may be higher priced but will pay in the end, rather than flimsy, second-class articles which require the midnight lamp and never-resting needle to keep in repair.

All are not obliged to calculate so closely, but all are required to make some sacrifices and economize in some degree, according to the sphere in life which they occupy.

The clerk may "shut up a street" with a pair of gloves or unpaid laundress' bill; the fast young man avoids the Belvidere because of a hundred-dollar champagne supper standing upon the books; the unlucky speculator replaces the diamond in his shirt-front with an unpretending gold pin, and throws five thousand more into the sweeping flood of his fabulous losses.

It is up and down all the world over, and while thrift, industry and hard work will not always save one from the great sea of see-saw, yet, combined with the good management which finds some surplus, be it ever so small, it will save one from tumbling ignominiously into the gutter.

### ACREEABLES.

Why is it that some people are so given to mocking us in our troubles and difficulties, and have such taunting remarks to bestow upon us if we meet with disappointments? You will fail in some undertaking, maybe, and, wanting sympathy, you tell a friend; most assuredly his answer will be, "I always told you so."

Write for a publication, and have your article declined, your comforter will happen in with his, "Humph! Just as I expected you to be! you ought to have known better than to have sent it." Now the editor will lose what good opinion he may once have had of you.

If you lend a few dollars to some acquaintance, and when the time comes around for its return he does not return it, 'twill not be long ere you hear some one say, "A fool and his money are soon parted." I knew you'd never get one cent of it back again. Well, I trust it will be a good lesson to you.

If the afternoon is lovely and all Nature is wearing its sweetest dress, you have no hesitation in taking an afternoon ramble; but while you are enjoying it there comes a heavy shower, and you hurry home as fast as your limbs will allow you. Ere you have time to make a change in your clothing, in comes Job's comforter with, "I knew just as well as I wanted to, that you'd get your clothes wet. You really ought to be more careful—it will take all the fresh look out of the dress. Well, I trust in future you will profit by experience."

Your next venture is getting a very worthy young man into a place of trust, and while you feel proud to know that he is meeting with deserved success, he may chance to go wrong—a very little, not much. You are blamed for giving him the recommendation, and following in its wake as a natural consequence, "I knew how it would be." How extremely comforting that is, isn't it?

Do you love skating, and are you fond of gliding over the clear, cold ice almost as swiftly as some healthy or exhilarating than this. You think no being can be unhappy where there are skates and ice. But, did you ever chance to fall? You saw more

stars than are laid down in the astronomies, didn't you? It wasn't pleasant, I know, and you thought no torment inflicted upon you could be greater. You had one far worse to bear, for the man who picked you up, did so with words which added insult to your injury, when he said: "I've been looking at you a long time, and I knew you'd crack your head."

Are human beings turned into ghouls, that they must eat into our sufferings and torture us with their agreeable (?) speeches?

Have you ever had your wife ask you your candid opinion as to the style of her dress? You may be more of a truth-teller than a flatterer, and your answer may be, "I don't take to it very well—there isn't enough of it." There, that is exactly like you all ways; you never did have any taste; it will be the answer; "but it's the fashion, and I am not going to make a dowdy of myself."

So much comes of giving a candid opinion. She wanted flattery, and not candor.

I have had many a true and sincere friend, whom I have been proud to take by the hand and call sister, and I have had so-called friends endeavor to wear my true ones away from me; and because they can not do it, they vent their spite by sending me little notes: "I never thought *her* much."

Let me for the three hundred and sixty-fifth time say, if people meet with misfortune, let them alone if you can not aid them, and do not taunt them; for it will be like "throwing water on a drowning rat." And you wouldn't want to strike a person when he has fallen and is helpless—now, would you?

EVE LAWLESS.

### FRANKNESS.

FRANKNESS is supposed to be a common virtue. It is most uncommon. It requires truth, simplicity, love, and genuine goodness. Many men speak truth very plainly when angry, many speak pleasant truth frankly. But few there are whose souls are so balanced in an atmosphere of love that they speak whatever needs to be said, to each and to all, plainly, gently, fully. The dearest friends live together for years without daring to speak things which they know, and which each party knows that the other knows. Parents live with a reserve years long toward their children. Children carry untouched, unsullied, thoughts and feelings that take hold of their very being. Friends meet part day by day—friends so true that they would almost die for each other (or, what is harder than this, who are willing to live for each other), and never speak of things that each knows is passing in the other's mind. It is very strange to see people come up to conversation in topics that by a tacit freemasonry are sacred, and, without word or look, one glides past on one side and the other upon the other side, and meet beyond, going down the common channel again. Was there ever a thoughtful, sensitive person that dared to be open, transparent, frank?

### Foolscap Papers.

#### A Very Serious Lecture.

A LONG time ago I advertised to give a lecture in a neighboring city. It was entitled, "Solace for the Serious," and was written by a very humorous friend of mine, at my request.

That night the Opera House, which I had engaged on good security, was literally jammed with the downhearted and dejected portion of the citizens, who expected something suitable to their case.

It was the most melancholy crowd I ever saw, and it seemed almost a sacrilege to talk to them about anything except graveyards. The first joke that occurred in the lecture I was almost constrained to apologize for. A little further along, a downcast man in the audience, who was a very sorrowful victim to too much mother-in-law, chuckled, but straightway tried to look more serious than ever. Then the lecture warmed, and one laughed here, and another there, until such good-humor pervaded the audience that every one was laughing at the jokes. Sometimes the room was filled so full of laughs that scores were obliged to put their heads out of the windows to laugh—there wasn't room enough inside.

Vest-buttons flew everywhere like pellets from a pop-gun, and a perfect tumult of merriment followed all through the lecture until ended, when quite a number began immediately to cry as if their hearts would break—they regretted so that it was over.

One man spoke out in meeting and said he had just buried his dear wife that day, but he was put in such good-humor by the lecture, he was sure he would never sorrow for her any more.

One very sober man opened his mouth so wide to laugh that he got the lockjaw, and they were obliged to put his head in a carpenter's vise to get his mouth open.

Three bushels of boot-heels were swept up the next morning—they had literally been stamped off.

One man went home in such good-humor that, although he was informed that the bank that had his money had broken, and he wasn't worth a cent, he laughed away so inordinately, his family thought he was crazy; and when he wouldn't let anybody sleep in the house for laughing all night, and kept it up the next day, his affectionate wife put him in the Asylum, where he could laugh as much as he wanted to.

One of the strangest cases in this list of accidents was of an old enemy of mine of long standing—a very hard-hearted old fellow. He went there with the sworn intention of not laughing at anything I might say; he kept his word, but he overstrained himself, and died.

An individual with a very small mouth attempted a very large laugh, when he came near being choked to death.

A bald gentleman laughed till he got an entire new head of hair.

At certain rare points in the lecture the mouth of the terra cotta statue of Slak-speare at one side of the stage was seen to widen; the rigid cheeks relaxed, one arm slowly ascended and a finger was placed along the side of his nose, his head inclined slowly backward, and he joined in the general roar.

A very quiet old lady, in an effort to suppress an unseemly burst of laughter, put her handkerchief over her mouth, and it was immediately drawn in, and strangled her.

One fellow, in a violent effort to laugh,

split his mouth clear around his head, and he ever afterward wore the top of his head stuck on like a lid.

One deaf and dumb man laughed so loud that he startled everybody, and his merriment so affected his system that his hearing and voice returned, but the rasal afterward had the audacity to sue me for damages, as he was thereby debarred from begging on the street, and his wife, he said, took advantage of his hearing and talked to him a great deal too much.

A very long-spirited young man stamped so excitedly that he smashed a ten-dollar plug-hat that had accidentally got under his feet; it was at the same joke that an old gentleman—a retired undertaker—laid down on the floor to roll and laugh, and was instantly stamped into a thousand pieces.

Two forlorn old maids grinned so continually that, at the close of the lecture, they couldn't get the wrinkles out of their faces, and they were obliged to iron them out with a smoothing-iron.

On the walls the frescoed figures of the Muses and Graces were seen to shake themselves all over, and several of the audience are willing to swear that they heard them laugh out loudly.

Strange as it may seem, at a certain telling joke the clock on the wall stopped and clapped its hands with great vehemence.

One very bilious-looking chap went there with the ague, but he completely outshook it; he shook it clear off of him, and has never had it since.

I have often been requested to repeat that lecture in other cities, but I have resolutely declined. It is entirely too violent—too stunning indeed. No amount of money could ever induce me to deliver it again.

I was obliged to destroy the manuscript of it, for when I took it home and put it in my desk, the laughs it contained kept popping off in a continual volley, till there was no peace within half a mile of it.

WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

### Short Stories from History.

**The Damon and Pythias of Arabia.**—A custom equally barbarous and superstitious prevailed among the Arabs previous to the introduction of Mohammedanism. They had consecrated two days of the week to two of their false divinities; on the first of these, which was considered as a day of happiness, the prince granted to all who came into his presence, whatever favor they chose to request; and on the second, which was reputed to be of a malignant aspect, all were immolated who were so imprudent as to solicit any favor, however just or reasonable, from a superstitious notion of appeasing the evil deity to whom the day was consecrated.

In the reign of Naam-ibn-Munzir, an Arab of the desert, named Tai, who had fallen from great opulence into extreme indigence, hearing the Naam's liberality much extolled, he resolved to have recourse to it. He set out on his journey, after having embraced his wife and children, and assured them he was going to seek a certain remedy for all their ills. The poor man, too much taken up with the thoughts of helping his family, took no heed of the fortune and evil days, and unfortunately chose the latter as that on which he appeared a suppliant before the king. Naam had no sooner seen him than, turning from him, he said: "Wretch! what hast thou done? and why present thyself before me on so fatal a day as this? Thy life is forfeited, and it is in my power to save thee."

Tai, seeing his death certain, throws himself at the prince's feet, and conjures him to delay his punishment at least for a few hours. "May I be permitted?" said he to him, "to embrace for the last time my wife and children, and to carry them some provisions, for the want of which they are likely to perish? Thou art too equitable to involve the innocent in the fate of the guilty. I swear, by all that is sacred, that I shall return before sunset, and thou mayest then put me to death, and I shall die without murmuring." The prince, very much affected with Tai's speech, was pleased to grant him the requested delay, but it was upon a condition that almost made void the favor: he required the security of a person whom he might put to death, if he should fail in his word. Tai, in vain, earnestly entreats all those that surrounded the prince. Not one would dare expose himself to so evident a danger. Then addressing himself to Cherik Benadi, the monarch's favorite, he spoke to him thus, his eyes bathed in tears: "And thou, Cherik, whose soul is so noble and great, wilt thou be insensible to my piteous tale? Canst thou refuse to be security for me? I call to witness the gods and men, that I shall return before the setting of the sun."

Cherik, naturally compassionate, was greatly moved by Tai's words and misfortunes. Turning to the prince, he said he did not scruple to be bound for Tai; who, without waiting for formal leave to depart, disappeared in an instant, and repaired to his wife and children.

The time limited for his return had almost expired. The sun was ready to terminate his course; yet there was no appearance of Tai. Cherik was led in chains to the place of punishment, and the executioner had already the ax uplifted to give the blow, when a man was perceived at a distance running along the plain. It was Tai himself, who was out of breath, and covered all over with sweat and dust. Horror seized him on seeing Cherik on the scaffold, ready to receive the blow of death. He flies to him, breaks his chains, and putting himself in his place, "I die well satisfied," said he, "having been so happy as to come in time to deliver thee."

This moving spectacle drew tears from all present; the king himself could not check his own. "I never saw anything so extraordinary," said he, transported with admiration. "Thou, Tai, thou art the model of that fidelity with which one ought to keep his word; and thou, Cherik, none can equal thy great soul and generosity. I abolish, in favor of you, an odious custom which barbarity had introduced among us; my subjects may, in future, approach me at all times without fear."

The monarch heaped benefactions upon Tai; and Cherik became dearer to him than ever.

The circumstances of this story are of a similar nature to that of Damon and Pythias, so famous in antiquity; but the action of Cherik may be justly considered as superior to that of Pythias; generosity having induced him to do for an unknown person, what friendship influenced Pythias to do in favor of Damon.

### Readers and Contributors.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. preserved for future orders.—Unavailable MSS. promptly returned, unless there be stamps accompanying the inclosure, for each return.—No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MS."—MSS., which are imperfect are not used or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; secondly, upon excellence of MS. as to copy; third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note size paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, bearing off each page as it is written, and carefully giving it its folio or page number.—A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unavailable to us are well worthy of use.—All experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Contributors must look to this column for all information in regard to correspondence. We can not write letters except in special cases.

We shall have to say *no* to "Pat's Compliment," "The Rail Ride," "Day's Sport," "Come Home," "The Cheerful Man," "A Gale Abeam," "A Land Wreck," "Six Hours in a Fire," "Methusalem," "Why I Voted for Spofford," "A Lot of Cherries," "The Mysterious Robberies," "The Lablanche Legacy," "A Newport Idyl," "The Grave," "Don't be in a Hurry, Boys," "Keep to the Right."

We can use "Ron and Ideal," "En Route," "Gum and the Buffalo Bull," "Fred's Experiment," "Died of Starvation," "Hands or Brains," "Cross Purposes," "Lillian's Love," "False and True."

To the serial, "An Inch of Evidence," we shall have to say *no*. It is somewhat diffuse and spiritless in narrative style, and tells too much. Authors err greatly who deem it necessary to give the minutiae of conversation and circumstance, leaving much to the reader's imagination and curtail on the immaterial or secondary points of the action. The serial here referred to would be much strengthened by excision of one-fourth of its length.

D. W. C. "The Old Immigrant" was pronounced unavailable at the time of its reception (June 13th.). No stamps for its return.

FRANK WILDER. *Ditto* above, as to "Summer Night's Dream."

The MS., "Beaver's Konversonshun," we will hold to consider.

BENI. No; go anywhere else than to Saratoga, Long Branch or Newport if you have "a little money that must go to the dogs," and buy some very expensive places. Go to some quiet village; or to the Maine coast, or to the St. Lawrence river fisheries.

ERTIE L. If a young man writes you, better at once show the note to one of your parents. There are so many little sins hidden in seemingly artless or harmless words that you can not be too cautious in the matter of correspondence with young men.

CICELY BROWN. A lady never should "make advances" to a gentleman. It is proper for her to encourage his advances but not heretofore seek his notice and attentions. To seem "forward" is the worst possible way to "catch a beau."

G. K. Of course we are going to publish the stories named. We are not in the habit of announcing serials which are not already in our hands.

HERMIONE. A new life of General Nathaniel Greene has recently appeared, from the hands of his grandson, said to be a model history of the Revolution. American News Co. will supply it, or any good bookseller will order it for you.

JULIE VOGEL. We can not remember to send you numbers containing your contributions. The only way is to watch for their appearance.

H. E. A. There is no work, that we know of, which treats of Taxidermy. It is to be learned by practice.

G. W. D. We know nothing whatever of the firm referred to, but certainly would not send money until the postmaster of the town addressed gave the fullest assurance of the reliability of the advertisers.

LIGHTNING JO. Your answer is contained in the above paragraph.

GALLANT. After having once accosted or bowed to a lady, a second bow is not only unnecessary, but a meeting, on the same day or occasion; but every gentleman is bound to show no lady any slight, so passing or mistaking her as to make a lady's position proper. At the first meeting of a gentleman and lady it is proper for the lady to give the first sign of recognition, by a smile, word or bow, but a gentleman must not be so formal as to rigidly insist for such a sign, since, in the multitude or crowd, many a woman is so absorbed or confused at what is passing around her as to be unable to give notice to every one who approaches. Therefore, the gentleman should be on the alert to see that he smiles no courtesy due to her. This is not, under any condition of things, to make avowed advances (as we have elsewhere stated) but she is expected to give proper encouragement, by word, look or smile, as to those who are in advance she desires, otherwise her own feelings and wishes may be seriously misconstrued. Many a pleasant acquaintance has been broken by unintentional coldness.

MOTHER. Let your girls have a number of dolls to play with, and teach them to make dresses for them, and also to make up the hair, and to calculate in their habits of industry, and also be useful to them in after years when they are matrons. Besides, such employment will keep them out of mischief.

AMATEUR. There is no harm in private theatricals, unless they are carried to an excess. In getting up an amateur performance, each member of the company should provide his or her own dress. To give facial expressions, a box of water colors, some fine chalk powder, camel's hair pencils and sponge are needed. Baric make is good for drawing in mustaches and eyebrows. Powdered wigs can be made of tow, raveled yarn or gray horse-hair, and the same may be used for the hair of the mustaches. Ermine can be made of cotton flannel, with black cloth tags sewed on. Crowns and scepters are made of pasteboard, and the scepter is made of silver and gold paper. A good theatrical wardrobe may be extemporized from cast-off finery found about a house. To make rocks, throw a gray blanket over a sofa or ottoman, and by this means, small gut strings, and arrange them to be tightened or loosened by screw pins. The strings must all be tuned to the same note, and then the instrument must be placed in a current of air, so that the wind can pass with freedom over its strings. In olden times these harps were placed in the windows of old castles, and their wild, world-like music caused the ignorant people to believe they were haunted.

YENKOW NIXONSON writes: "Will you please tell me how I can loosen the stoppers of glass and toilet bottles?" Let a drop of oil flow around the stopper, and stand the bottle near the fire; when it is warm tap the stopper lightly, and you can then draw it out. Repeat the process if the first trial is not successful.

MISS ALLEN'S BUNDLES says: "I was engaged to a young gentleman, and the engagement was broken, but I can not return the ring the gentleman gave me, as I can not get it off my finger; what am I to do?" If the engagement was broken, it is better to return the ring to the gentleman who gave it, than to keep it, as you pride would cause you to get the ring off by severing; but we can give you some advice for removing tight rings, which may serve in your case, if you are anxious to return the ring to the gentleman to whom it was given. Take a strong piece of ordinary twine, scrape it thoroughly, and then wind it round the finger as tightly as possible, commencing at the point of the finger, and continuing until the ring is reached, when the end of the twine must be forced under the ring, and be then unwound slowly, when the ring will come off as you unwind the twine.

MATTIE REIGHTER. You will find as much borax as a pint of water will absorb, if you use a teaspoonful of olive oil, and twenty drops of almond essential oil, mixed together, a splendid recipe for a hair-wash.

JACKSON GREELY. Certainly you did wrong to allow your lady friend to pay for your theater tickets and supper. Never permit, except under accidental circumstances, a lady to pay for refreshments, vehicles, railway tickets, etc., etc., when you accompany her to places of amusement.

Unanswered questions on hand will appear next week.

## "WHY IS IT EVER THUS?"

BY A. P. M., JR.

Again, oh, hark! again thy voice bring!  
Answer the dreamer's prayer for calm and rest!  
Tell me, in notes to melt the chordful string,  
Where, where is bliss that's not in sorrow drest?

Oh! I have watched the changing shades of fate  
Calmly, or reckoned on the cast of dies;  
Made my young mind take pleasure for its mate,  
And pictured heaven with my dreaming eyes.

Visions of gold, and thoughts to thrill the soul;  
Sights of fair Anzies 'yond the rainbow's arch;  
Oceans of silver in a billowed roll  
Or plains immortal, where throats ne'er do parch;

But, he the dream however sweet and fair,  
It fades, and there is sadness when it's gone!  
Why, why must we find joys that are most rare,  
To have them leave us, slowly, one by one?

## A Long Lesson.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"WELL, upon my word! upon my word, if it ain't Jerusha Clements! Why, Jerusha, I wouldn't never 'a' known you, you're so spruced up with your Grecian bender and your fly-away overskirt! Bless me, child! but you're as welcome as the birds in May!"

And dear old grandma Clements peered, first over her steel-rimmed glasses, then through them, at the pretty, graceful girl that stood laughing in the shady doorway.

A very pretty girl she was; one who would have gladdened more critical eyes than grandma Clements'; a girl, young, fresh and blooming, with eyes the color of deep-tinted heliotrope, and a complexion that was tinged daintily with carnation and rosy-white.

"Then I can come in, grandma? I wasn't sure you'd have me, you know, after three years at your especial abomination—Madame Palliser's!"

She stepped lightly in, and suffered the old lady to kiss and caress her, and remove her tiny, fashionable hat, and take her white silk lace-covered parasol into the cool, dark bedroom.

"It seems as if I can't get enough o' look-in' at you, Jerusha—"

The stylish little hand went up in a gesture of deprecation.

"There's a dear grandma—please don't call me 'Jerusha,' will you? it's so ugly, and so horribly outlandish. All the gentlemen—all the young ladies, I mean, at Madame Palliser's called me Aimee—my name is Amy Jerusha, you know."

"Not call you Jerusha, when it has been your name these seventeen years, and mine sixty year afore that? 'Pears to me you're kind o'—kind o' stuck up like. I don't know what Peter Bradley 'll say to you—"

"Peter Bradley, grandma! do you suppose I care what he says or thinks about me?"

"You'd ought to care, then, Jerusha—Amy—no, Jerusha. I shall call you, 'cause that other ain't natural to my old tongue. You'd ort to care, seein' as he expects, and we all expect, you two to get married some day. You know that well enough, Jerusha."

A light flush surged over her smooth, pretty cheek, followed by a curl of disdain on the red lips.

"But I've changed my mind since I've been to Madame Palliser's. I intend to marry a gentleman, and not a plain, countrified fellow like Peter Bradley."

She spoke very decidedly; and then, twirling the rings on her finger, walked over to the open vine-shaded window, followed by grandma Clements' surprised eyes, that bore a great deal of pain in their kind, faded light.

"Well, child, I'm afraid that French teacher ain't put the best o' ideas in your head. But, mebbe, I'm behind the times; mebbe Pete 'll like you better for all these whims and fashionable fancies," and the old lady turned to her kneading-trough, and commenced molding over the tea rusk.

The pink reflection left by the brilliant sunset had mellowed to a tender pink tint; the delicious fragrance of the honeysuckle was in the air, and over all the quiet beauty of the country landscape, a faint moonlight silvered and shone. In the huge, old-fashioned front porch—Aimee called it "piazzaz"—she was standing, leaning against the rude wire trellis that supported the magnificent honeysuckle; leaning there very carelessly, and listening very indifferently to the eager, trembling words that her companion spoke.

"It's not fair, Jerusha—Amy, I mean—I can't always remember it, dear—but, surely, you are not going to throw me over because I am countrified and plain? Oh, Amy, my heart sinks when I think of it! I don't understand it at all; I mean I can't for the life of me see why I ain't just the same to you as ever I was. You loved me last year, this time, Je—"

She listened impatiently, wondering how she could explain to this unburned, honest-hearted lover that he and his ways no longer suited her and her new, romantic notions of life.

But Peter Bradley was no fool; he knew, as plainly as if she had told him, the reasons; and, as he had said, it made his heart sink for he loved her so.

"I'll let you give me up," he said, after an hour's talk, sadly and slowly. "Maybe some day you'll change—"

Amy flushed hotly.

"I shall never change. Even if I did—I—well, I may as well tell you, I'm engaged to Mr. Fontaine."

Then, when the truth was suddenly blurted out—truth she had guarded so secretly since her return home—Amy for a moment wondered if Peter did love her so dearly? For he turned so deathly pale at her words. He waited a moment; then, with an air of cold, quiet dignity that Amy never before had noticed in him, he spoke.

"I hope you will be happy. If I had known you were promised to another, I would never have stood in the way. I may as well say good-by, then, Amy."

And, without even a reproving glance, he walked off, very deliberately, and, to Amy's surprise, very grandly.

She was a little chagrined, a little disappointed. Not that she intended to take Pete back again, or give this Mr. Fontaine up; but she would have liked for Pete to have made a scene.

But he didn't; he only walked away from her—not to meet again for eleven long years.

"You can do just as you please about it, Minnie, of course. Only, I confess I don't quite approve."

He was a tall, fine-looking man who

spoke, with a heavy, flowing beard, and a quick, self-assured dignity of address that his bright, calm blue eyes did not belie—a very carefully dressed man, faultless even to the polish on his boots and the set of his necktie.

Just now, when he smiled down on the little woman beside him, he looked younger and happier than he generally did, so greatly did the smile lighten his impassive, stern features.

"Then, Pete, we'll consider it settled in the negative, for of course I should not hire this Mrs. Fontaine without your entire approval. But, she's such a splendid hair-dresser."

And, womanlike, little Minnie Bradley sighed wofully over the forbidden fruit.

A frown gathered on the gentleman's forehead; then a curious, misty light clouded his eyes. But his voice was tender and clear as ever.

"I do not want you to be disappointed, dear. I only offered the objection because I dislike married servants. Perhaps this we—lady will prove an exception."

"Oh, I am sure she will! She seemed so thankful when I saw her, and half agreed to give her the position as seamstress and toilette-maid. She is so pale and wan, too, and in her widow's dress, besides."

"Oh! is she a widow? Minnie, quick, is Mrs. Fontaine a widow?"

And Pete dashed down his paper and caught his sister's hand.

"Why, what need you care, you wild boy? She's nothing to us, if she is."

But Pete was hunting for his hat and overcoat, regardless of Minnie's words.

"Where will I find her, sis— You said No.— street, though, I think."

And before Minnie could overcome her speechless surprise, Pete was off and away.

She sat down to solve the enigma. What ailed him? She had only actually known him a year or two, brother though he was, having lived since her childhood with an uncle, who had died and left her and Pete rich.

Whatever ailed Pete she did not know; and so she sat and waited and wondered until a carriage drove up to the door, and she heard her brother's steps and a lighter footfall on the hall carpet.

Then Pete rushed in, more graceless and merry than she ever had seen him.

"Mrs. Fontaine can't come, Min'; she's got a place as housekeeper—"

"Pshaw!" interrupted Minnie, in the first flush of disappointment. Then, remembering Pete's impulsive conduct, she went on:

"But, what made you fly off at such a tangent? If I had known you had such an antipathy to widows—"

"But I haven't an antipathy to widows— and, besides, Mrs. Fontaine's not a widow— are you, Jerusha?"

And in she walked, flushing or paling, with the traces of tears on her thin cheeks— the same, yet so strangely different, as pretty, proud, foolish Jerusha Clements of eleven years back.

"I've married her, Minnie, and I've been hunting eleven years for her—and to think you should find her!"

So, in the port of peace, whether her bark had almost miraculously drifted, Jerusha found everlasting anchor, so thankful that her early vanities, though they had wrought misery for half a score of years, had not wrecked her at last.

Strangely Wed:  
OR,  
WHERE WAS ARTHUR CLARE?BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,  
AUTHOR OF "ADRIA, THE ADVENTURER," "CECIL'S DE-  
CEIT," ETC., ETC.CHAPTER XI.  
THE MYSTERIOUS HOUSE.

The little lock of hair wrought a complete revulsion in Justine's mind.

She was brave now to dare any danger which might threaten her, or to endure the petty annoyances to which Lambert's persecutions might subject her. Her elastic temperament threw off the dim foreboding of evil which had oppressed her since she involuntarily covered before him, when he boasted so confidently of his power and his will to bring a terrible fate upon her should she attempt to defeat his resolve of making her his bride.

She pressed the little curl to her lips in silent rapture. She wept over it, laughed over it, gloated over it at first, then, nerved by it with a bravery which would have enabled her to face a legion of enemies without flinching, hid away the unconscious but expressive thing, and again pulled the check-string sharply.

Simpson stopped the carriage in sulky obedience.

"Drive back to The Terrace directly," was Justine's command.

"That aren't according to the master's orders, Miss. Sorry to go ag'in your will, but I must follow directions."

"But I have changed my mind, and no longer wish to pursue this journey. Turn about at once, I say. If you do not, and if you attempt to bandy words, I will report you to Mr. Granville for disobedience and insolence."

"Can't help it, Miss," returned Simpson, with sullen persistence. "Obey Miss Justine's orders where they do not clash with mine, but make all possible speed, and let nothing swerve you from the direct course I have described." Them were his very words, Miss.

"Well, obey them to the very letter then, if you must," cried Justine, impatiently. "I hope you happen to be acquainted with our destination, however; this is not the road to Bayfield."

"We are not going to Bayfield," returned the man, imperturbably.

"Where then?"

"Indeed, Miss, if the master did not tell you, I am not at liberty to say."

Cracking his whip about the ears of the horses, he started them forward at a rapid pace, perhaps to avoid further questioning.

Justine was vexed at the man's open disregard of her commands, while his obedience to Mr. Granville's order appeared unnecessarily implicit. She could not know that the latter had taken this precaution to provide against any whim his wayward ward might entertain upon the way, which might work against the ultimate object he had in view.

She threw herself petulantly back upon the cushioned seat, submitting with manifested ill-grace to the phase of affairs presented. But, vexation could not long retain the ascendancy while that tiny talisman gave

out its unspoken message, its assurance of good faith and watchful care from the man whose unexplained course and months of silence had never caused her to doubt him.

"What if Gerald, failing to find me there, should be gone before I can return?" she soliloquized. "But no! he knows something of my trouble and is watching over me. The rest I can trust to him. It is his prerogative to act or to wait, as it is his to judge which will be best at last; it is mine to love him, and to believe in the perfect wisdom of any thing he may do."

"It's provoking certainly to be carried away against my will, thanks to the stupidity of the dolt on the box there; but Guardy promised to follow in the course of a day or two, and then I shall insist on returning immediately to The Terrace."

"What an impressive little simpleton I proved myself to let Lambert's threat terrify me so. Justine Clare, I am thoroughly ashamed of you. Where was your spirit of independence, which has carried you through a thousand wild freaks, that it should desert you in your first hour of actual need? Think of you running like a coward because a man showed himself short-sighted enough to insist upon marrying you whether or no! I repeat, I am thoroughly ashamed that you should have shown the white feather at the first onslaught—or any one succeeding it, for that matter."

"Never mind! I shall retrieve my character in my own eyes yet. I fear nothing, now that I know Gerald is near me."

And that, more even than her natural audacity and recklessness of consequences, was the secret of her sudden bravery.

The carriage rolled on and on. Glancing from the window now and then, Justine saw that they had left familiar places behind them, and were passing through a wild, bleak country, quite unknown to her.

"Wonder if Guardy thinks it necessary to lose me even to himself?" she ran on, in her thoughts. "He's determined to give me a glimpse of my native wilds with a vengeance, if he proposes secluding me in this forsaken land, where I haven't seen a house for the last two miles except one, and that was a barn—which I'm afraid isn't an original discovery on my part, as I've heard the same expression at some previous period of my existence."

"Where can we be now?—let me see! I'm perfectly at home anywhere within a radius of twenty miles of The Terrace; and from the time we have been upon the way I imagine we are nearly thirty miles away. Truly, I hope our terminus may soon be reached, for I am fearfully and wonderfully hungry."

She was tired, too, and curling herself up in a corner, went fast asleep. She was awakened by a lurch of the carriage as it was brought to a sudden standstill, and was surprised to find that it was now quite dark.

The outlines of a house at a little distance from the roadside, were dimly defined through the gloom. Simpson got down from the box, and approaching the building, ascended some steps, and rapped long and loudly upon the door with the butt of his riding-whip.

The imperative summons was answered after some minutes' delay. Simpson held a whispered confab with the person at the door, and at last came back to assist Justine from the vehicle. He held the carriage-lantern to light her way over the uneven path to the door, himself remaining behind to take charge of the wearied carriage horses.

She was met in the doorway by a man carrying a small, shaded lamp. He led her through a long, flagged passage into a lighted, comfortable room in the rear of the house. He excused himself with a few civil words, and Justine, left alone, took a leisurely survey of her surroundings.

There was a small fireplace set back in a deep recess, with a sliding wirework screen in front, now partially withdrawn. A broad hearth of bricks formed the floor of the recess, and extended into the room, which was covered with a thick, bright-woven rag-carpet, with here and there a druggist rug placed in exposed spots to preserve it from uneven wear. The furniture was plain, heavy and substantial; chairs and table of dark mahogany, well worn but carefully preserved. An open bookcase was well filled with volumes and files of newspapers, which a cursory glance showed to be yellow with time and frayed with much handling. A couple of square windows had small diamond panes set in metallic framework. An old-fashioned wooden clock ticked cheerily from a cast-iron bracket against the otherwise bare wall. Shades of close network, finished with ball fringe, were suspended over the tops of the windows; the bookcase had a cover of the same, and network shades protected the backs of the large, heavy chairs.

Every thing was scrupulously clean, and arranged with an exact regard for methodical precision in the way of right-angles and straight lines.

Justine's observations were cut short by the return of the man who had met her at the door, accompanied now by a meek-looking little woman of that colorless type where hair, eyes and complexion seem only different gradations of a dull, grayish tint.

She had long, thin hands, that worked nervously with the hem of the clean gingham apron she wore, and a way of starting when addressed, as if waking from an habitual abstraction.

"My name is Wert, Miss, and this is my wife. She'll do her best to make you comfortable while you remain with us. We're but humble people, as you may see, but such as we have is at your service, and we're honored by Mr. Granville's confidence in choosing our place for you, which his man has explained to me this morn'g for doing. There's no fear that you'll be intruded on here, and if you'll excuse the poor hospitality we can offer, we'll be happy to receive your commands."

"Much obliged, I'm sure," said Justine, somewhat curtly. "In that case I should like a good warm dinner soon as it's convenient to serve it up; and Mrs. Wert, plenty of strong coffee, if you please. I'm chilled through, and hungry as a bear, through having missed my regular luncheon, and being jolted over the most execrable road in Christendom. I suppose you've no room prepared for me yet, so I'll just put my wraps here for the present."

She threw off her outdoor garments, tossing them carelessly on the square dark table. Mrs. and Mr. Wert exchanged glances of questioning and response.

"Take the young lady's things to the Dark Room, Hannah," said Mr. Wert, "and pre-

pare it for her use. But, first, get Miss Clare's supper, and I suppose you'd better bring it to her here."

"We're plain folk, as I've said, Miss, and we have our three meals, which we call breakfast, dinner and supper—but dinner comes exact in the middle of the day always. You'll find it a change from the style at The Terrace, I'm afraid."

"No matter," returned Justine, indifferently. "I shall tax your hospitality but for a limited period. Pray, take no unnecessary trouble on my account, Mrs. Wert."

Justine addressed herself directly to the pale little woman, who had courtesied low upon entering the room, but thus far had not spoken a word. She gathered Justine's wrappings over her arm, and waited to ask in a thin quaver which suited her nervous appearance:

"Have you any orders, Miss? I can bring you muffins and coffee at once, but if you'll have something more prepared, I'll make haste to get it ready."

"That will suffice, thank you," answered Justine.

Mrs. Wert retired, and her husband, lingering to stir up the fire officiously and draw the network shades low over the windows, kept up a running fire of apologies, interspersed with an artful mixture of inquiry by no means relished by Justine.

She experienced an aversion for the man already. He was thin and sallow, with insinuating address, and a stealthy, catlike manner of movement which carried him about noiselessly.

"He looks as though he were watching to make a spring," she thought, when at last he had withdrawn.

"What a queer room this is, with the fire fenced in a corner to itself, and the windows like two great eyes staring down through that wonderful netting which is like those coquettish little lace veils I fancy, calculated to obscure but not to conceal."

"If I were a mouse in a trap and that man a cruel cat, I don't think there'd be much chance for me; but while the mouse ran free I can imagine him the most obsequious grimalkin amicably inclined that ever worked to persuade a silly little victim within reach of his velvety clutches."

Mrs. Wert returned with a large tray on which a simple but appetizing repast was neatly arranged. Receiving Justine's assurance that she required no attendance, the woman again withdrew, and when she came back, half an hour later, announced that a room was prepared for the girl's occupancy.

Justine signified her wish to retire at once, and was shown up a flight of steep, narrow stairs with balustrades on either side, leading from the center of a large, square, bare apartment opening from the passage by which she had entered. It led through a trap-door into a similar room above, which was also destitute of furnishing.

The woman conducted her in silence. She threw open a door, and when Justine had entered, lingered hesitatingly upon the threshold.

"Good night," she said. "There's a hand-bell if you should want any thing."

"I'm accustomed to waiting on myself, and will scarcely need to trouble you. Thank you, and good-night."

The woman, with her hand upon the knob, drew the door partially shut, but opened it again and advanced a step into the room.

"You don't look kind," she said. "You won't be afraid sleeping away here by yourself, like this?"

"Not unless ghosts walk here," returned Justine, laughingly; "and I defy silent visitors to disturb me this night at least. I am ready to emulate the Seven Sleepers, notwithstanding that I napped on the way here."

"Then you'll not be frightened at stray sounds," continued Mrs. Wert, glancing nervously over her shoulder. "It's a big house, you know, and the wind sighs through it lonesome-like. It startles me sometimes, and I'm used to it."

She spoke in a quick, suppressed way, with a wistful expression on her colorless face. Justine felt that some anxiety for her had called it there, and one of her impulses sent her close to the woman, and standing on tiptoe she touched her lips to the other's faded cheek.

You look as though you had lived alone here until the gloomy place had worn out your nerves. I hope you are not sorry I have broken your solitude—or am I mistaken in supposing it a desolate place? Truth to tell, I was fast asleep over the latter part of the road."

"It's a lonely place," said Mrs. Wert, with a shiver. "There's a village a couple of miles away, but I never go there. Good-night, again, Miss Clare."

Left alone, Justine glanced about the room with a little shudder at its somber aspect, and some surprise that its appointments should be incongruous as they were compared with that portion of the house she had already seen.

The floor was of dark, polished wood, uncarpeted. The walls were painted in imitation of paneling, in startling contrast of black and white. The hangings were black velvet; the furniture ebony. An ebony bedstead, large and square, filled one corner of the room, and over this a gay coverlet had been thrown, which seemed strangely out of place, contrasted with the funeral aspect of the rest.

There was no fire, and the light placed upon the stand by the bedside struggled unequally with the shadows in the room.

"Cheerful!" said Justine, contemplatively. "Thank Providence, I'm blessed with strong nerves and a dull imagination. No wonder that poor little woman looks like a ghost, and is frightened at the sound of her own footsteps."

She undressed, and, extinguishing the light, crept into the great bed, while the last thought that flitted through her drowsy brain was:

"I shall meet Gerald to-night—in my dreams."

So she might have done, but her sleep was sound enough to exclude all fancies for a time; and when she started up in the darkness, thoroughly awake in an instant, it was with the conviction that some adequate cause had aroused her.

Listening, at first she could distinguish no sound. Then she heard the patter of soft footfalls, sometimes slow, then fast like the rush of a light body, just without her room.

"The spirits walk," she said to herself. "No person ever stepped like that. Well, until their ghostships call upon me in a more decided form, I'll not attempt to disturb their innocent recreations."

And, pulling the covers over her ears, she drifted into somnolency again.

## CHAPTER XII.

A GLIMPSE OF THE GHOST.

JUSTINE awoke with the light of day streaming into her room, to find Mrs. Wert standing by the bedside, looking even grayer and more colorless in the morning light than she had appeared on the preceding evening.

"I made bold to come in to loop back the curtains," she said, apologetically, "and to see if you should want any thing. I am sorry if I disturbed you."

"Well, then, I am not, for I never would have known that daylight had come with all those draperies down. This room looks as if it might have been fitted up in the time of the Inquisition and reserved for a sentence chamber; all it needs is the emblem of the skull and crossbones. Pardon me if it is your taste I have been criticising, Mrs. Wert."

"It is not mine," replied the other, with an involuntary shudder. "Our landlord furnished the house throughout. The rooms below are intended for our use, but all the rest are kept at his disposal."

"He must be a man of exceedingly cheerful temperament if all the rest are in unison with this. Am I in danger of enjoying the society of such a paragon, or does he not make his permanent residence here?"

"He is never here himself," replied Mrs. Wert, and then made haste to change the subject. "Did you rest well?"

"Quite; you know I assured you that I would. But I heard the spirit resident here, notwithstanding."

"The what?" asked the woman, in a startled tone, her face turned away and her nervous hand rattling the furniture of a close ebony washstand which she was arranging.

"The spirit! The place is haunted of course. I shall look out for secret doors, hidden springs and hollow walls, as I'm not superstitious enough to believe that even a ghost can exist in nonentity. To avoid the idleness which might lead me into mischief, I'm determined to hunt down the mystery which a place like this must conceal, and dive to the bottom of it but that I'll find the solution."

The woman's thin hands dropped limp and heavy to her side. She turned her colorless face with a hunted look on it toward the bed where Justine supported herself on one elbow, her tone of mock seriousness belied by the arch expression of her countenance.

"Don't you do it," she exclaimed, in a terrified half-whisper. "If there is a mystery don't you meddle with it. Oh, it's woe to them that are brought here, and more than all it's woe to me!"

Justine looked at her in amaze. She had no idea of her light words being accepted in a literal sense, or of having any consequence attached to them.

The other read her astonishment, and dropped her head with an abashed air.

"Don't mind me, please," she murmured, deprecatingly. "I have queer spells sometimes, and forget. You frightened me—talking of spirits, you know."

"But is there a mystery?" persisted Justine, eagerly. "Oh, it would be splendid to happen across a bona fide haunted house of the kind one meets with in novels, where the heroine routs out a gang of counterfeiters or secret banditti, single-handed."

The ghost of a smile which had no mirth in it flitted over the woman's lips, and there was pitiful entreaty in her pale eyes.

"My nerves aren't strong," she said, "and he—my husband—don't like me to give way to them. Don't let him know we talked of such things; it's of no consequence, of course, but I'd rather not."

"Most certainly I shall not report our conversation to him," returned Justine, with a touch of asperity.

"It's my belief," she continued to herself, as Mrs. Wert silently withdrew, "that poor woman is afflicted with domestic tyranny of the worst order; and that she's afraid to trust her tongue lest it should betray the fact unawares."

Justine dressed and went below to the room into which she had been ushered the night before.

The table was laid with a single plate, while toasted ham and breakfast crullers were keeping warm upon the hearth. Mrs. Wert came in with a fresh omelet and rich coffee with the cream boiled into it.

The gray, nervous little woman was a proficient cook; and Justine, with the hearty appetite of perfect health, did ample justice to all that was placed before her.

"Send Simpson to me, please," she said, when she was through with the meal. "If the churl can be persuaded to vary an atom from his master's orders, he can have the gratification of my company back to The Terrace; if not, I wish to send a message with him to Mr. Granville."

"He is gone already," said Mrs. Wert. "He left before daybreak."

"Well, then," concluded Justine, "I must e'en content myself until my guardian comes, I suppose. What books have you there?

and a vestibule she had observed opening from it, she emerged into a large yard. It was inclosed by a high picket-fence, and every picket was spiked at the top.

The house seemed rambling and disproporportioned. Its whole narrow length ran back in the inclosure, the one exposed side being the front which faced the roadway.

The picket-fence was joined to the corner of the house by a narrow door which was securely padlocked. Justine noted the solidity and strength of all the appointments and marveled that it should be so.

"It seems like a prison where they try to delude the captive by giving him the semblance of liberty, but make sure all the while to keep him secure," she thought.

Turning a corner she came upon Wert, binding straw about the trunks of some young trees to preserve them from the severity of approaching winter weather.

She returned his salutation and was passing on, when her awakened curiosity centered itself upon a question which she turned back to ask him.

"By the way, Mr. Wert, who is your landlord?"

"Is it possible you do not know?" he returned, in his smooth address. "It is Mr. Granville."

Which answer let Justine further still into the depths of amazed wonderment.

That night again, and every one succeeding it, she heard the pattering of soft footfalls and the sudden rushes that stirred the air like the sound of a light, swift body, which came and went just without her room.

She read Faust in the multiplied gloom of substance and shadow which her sabbled apartment presented, and crept into bed of nights with her teeth all in a chatter.

Some with cold feet, perils, and perversely tried to convince herself that she was prepared to have her curly hair bristle upon end in presence of some actual revelation of supernatural order.

With little success, it must be confessed, such a minimum of the common element of superstition did she imbibe, as proved by the fact that Faust, combined with such surroundings, could not appall her.

She lay in the darkness, listening to the mysterious sounds, taking a wicked satisfaction in the belief that if only required her to pounce out suddenly in long night-dress and slippers, to discover the very human agency which she supposed was accountable. But it suited her whimsical fancy to let imagination run riot in this unexplored field.

"My ghost is the only satisfaction I have in the place," she thought; "so I'll not disembody myself by 'laying' it just at present."

Once she asked permission to explore the closed rooms, but Mrs. Wert manifested such repudiation that in very pity she did not again revert to the subject.

Perhaps she would not have relinquished the project so rapidly, had not her own thoughts been filled as they were with Gerald Fonteney—her husband.

The days passed until the week was completed and a new one began, and still Mr. Granville had not made his appearance.

One day Justine was out on the broad path which lay on the sunny side of the house, a large tartan-plaid scarf draped over her head and about her shoulders. She loved outdoor exercise, and through means of it now was able to sustain an undiminished flow of animal spirits, though the atmosphere of the house grown familiar, was oppressive as well.

Glancing up the somber walls, a fact which had hitherto escaped her observation became apparent to her.

She had supposed that the apartment she occupied filled the southwest corner of the building; but observing the relative positions of the windows from without, she became convinced that there must be a space eight or ten feet wide between the Dark Room and the outer western wall.

The fact might not have appeared worthy of her attention even then, but she thought there was a window in her room opening directly to the west.

When there again she looked about her with a new interest. There were three windows on the south side similar to those in the room below, being large, square single sashes, with diamond panes set in metallic frames. When made fast they would be impenetrable as an iron grating.

The heavy velvet curtains sweeping from ceiling to floor were drawn back from these, admitting a plentiful flood of light. On the west side was another curtain which she remembered new had not been withdrawn during her sojourn there.

She lifted it to find that it concealed not a window, but a door.

That it had long been unused was evident at sight. There was a broken lock, and a bolt rusted fast in the open socket.

Justine tried to force it back, but the effort was a vain one.

"Bluebeard's chamber, and I have not the magic key," she soliloquized. "Never mind! Curiosity is the watchword, and woman's wit will penetrate what lies behind, truly as I possess the gift of necromancy in my soul."

The little night-lamp on the ebony stand caught her eye.

"Eureka!" she cried, striking an attitude. "Behold my clear before me—straight through grease, I might say, but that I detect pans."

She dropped oil from the lamp freely upon the rusted bolt. Then working it gradually loose, had the satisfaction of finding it slide back beneath her hand.

"Now, open sesame!"

The door flew back with the sudden pressure she applied to it.

She was prepared for a cloud of dust and the musty air of an unused closet. Instead was the quick patter of steps, followed by a rush and a savage spring, forcibly checked midway.

Justine saw before her the author of the sounds to which she had listened every night, speculating idly over them. She found the solution of the noises, and the proof of the mystery.

A blood-thirsty, held in leash, guarded a door at the opposite end of this—which was merely an anteroom.

CHAPTER XIII.

COUNTER-REVELATIONS.

JUSTINE recoiled as the hound sprung toward her, but a well-seasoned thong attached to its collar and fastened to a ring in the wall held it back.

She had only time for one hurried glance, but that was sufficient to embrace all that was to be seen.

A room about eight feet wide and twice as long, with three doors opening into it, one from her room, another which she

rightly conjectured must communicate with the central portion of the house, and the one guarded by the savage brute. Opposite her was one window in the western wall.

In the moment that her glance comprehended the whole, she heard a step on the bare floor of the outer room and a tap at her own door. She had barely time to retreat precipitately and drop the curtain over the still-unlocked doorway, when Mrs. Wert entered.

"Mr. Granville has just come and is asking for you, Miss Clare," said she. There was an uncertain mingling of relief and apprehension on her gray face, but Justine did not observe it.

"Guardy here?" cried the latter, joyfully. "At last! I will be down directly."

She would have darted past to meet him without a second's delay but for that open door behind the velvet curtain.

There was a slight sound from that direction—the light footfall of the hound as it moved uneasily within the limit prescribed by its leash. Mrs. Wert started and glanced suspiciously toward Justine, but the latter affected to have heard nothing.

After an instant's hesitation the woman went away, and Justine flew to draw close the concealed door and shoot the rusted bolt into its place.

Her guardian met her with affectionate solicitude. He answered the questions she poured upon him in the manner that suited his purpose best, or evaded them entirely, which was not a difficult matter to accomplish where one followed close upon another.

He gave no hint of the terrible injury which had befallen Lambert, or of the critical situation in which the latter now lay. He was not prepared yet to let the girl know that the fear which had driven her away had no longer foundation for existence.

"And Sylvie is quite well, again, you say?" commented Justine. "How she must miss the provocations that were always running counter to her notions of conventionalism and ladylike decorum. The dear little Puritan! how I am longing to see her!"

And she sent a series of loving messages to you? Mr. Granville, but is quite prepared to do without you for a little time longer. I had her pack a small trunk with such articles as would be most necessary during your absence from The Terrace, and she supposes that you are staying with the Martins in Bayfield. I will call Wert to convey the trunk to your room, and do you run away and dress for the evening. I shall want to hold a state consultation with you after dinner is over.

"My dear Guardy, you have put yourself to unnecessary trouble," returned Justine. "I brought away in my portmanteau all that I've required thus far, and I'm quite ready to return to The Terrace without delay. I am ashamed of myself that I was ever coward enough to leave through all the reason I had for doing so."

"There, we will talk of that again, my dear."

And Mr. Granville chuckled out in secret at Wert.

It had been his wish always that Justine should dress in a manner befitting the position of equality she held in his household. He had educated her, avowedly, at his own expense, and her annual allowance of three hundred dollars had not more than sufficed to provide her with suitable clothing.

She was passionately fond of decided colors, which were well adapted to her clear, dark, riant style.

Looking over the contents of the little trunk, she chose a dress of scarlet marino, of dead fineness, with overskirt and bell-tails of rich black, and a snowy puff of lace at throat and wrists, a tiny cluster of white blossoms in her short dark curls, and Marie Antoinette slippers, with broad gold buckles, twinkling with the rapid motion of the little feet.

They dined together, Mr. Granville and Justine, and with Wert in waiting, conversed only on ordinary topics. But, after the service was cleared away and they were left alone, Justine reverted at once to the subject which occupied her thoughts.

"I hope you are prepared to take me back with you, Guardy. When do you return—to-morrow?"

"Yes, in the morning. But, Justine, I do not think you will agree to going back quite so soon."

"Indeed then, you don't know how anxious I am to get back to The Terrace. How did you ever manage to get hold of such a dismal, dreary place as this, Guardy? It is like being buried alive to stay here."

"Then you don't like it?" he asked, carelessly.

"I never have horrors, or you would have found me in the most ultramarine depths of ennui. Please, must I resort to coaxing for permission to go back with you?"

"Quite the contrary, Justine. Nothing will afford me greater pleasure, provided you fall in with my views. You left The Terrace to avoid Lambert's persecutions, and if you return there now, it must be under the protection of one who has a husband's right to preserve you from his importunities. Will you go back with me as my wife, Justine?"

She sprung up with utter amazement, depicted upon her countenance.

"I know you will be surprised at first," he continued, waving her back into her seat. "You have known me all your life, and you can be sure that I will make you a considerate husband."

"Has all the world gone mad?" cried Justine. "You, Mr. Granville, wishing to marry me! It seems incredible."

"Yet there have been marriages more ill-assorted. We are thoroughly acquainted with each other's dispositions and habits, and knowing them, may be able to avoid the rocks of contention on which wedded happiness is so often wrecked. I am older than you; but you, my little girl, will be none the worse for having an experienced head to balance some of your thoughtless impulses. Are you willing to be an old man's darling, Justine?"

"I am both surprised and grieved, Mr. Granville. You have been very kind to me since I—a little orphan child—was left dependent upon your care, and in a measure on your bounty. Believe me, I am not ungrateful; but when you speak of marriage, I must think that you are carrying generosity to an extreme which comprises injustice to yourself and to Sylvie. There is certainly no necessity for this, Guardy! I am willing to endure the annoyances I am still subjected to from Lambert. If I am brought into contact with him. There can

be no danger so imminent to me but that you, as my protector, can ward it off; or, if doing so will in any manner incommode or injure you, I have quite faith enough in my own ability to manage my welfare."

"My dear, you have not comprehended the object of my proposal. It is not merely for the purpose of protecting you from Lambert that I urge this. Don't you know that you are a charming little creature, Justine, and that I am not too old to be sensible to the influence of your charms? I have not asked you to be my wife without mature reflection."

"But you have asked it without entertaining more than a sincere and kindly affection, such as you have always evinced for me. I have heard, Mr. Granville, how devotedly you loved your wife—Sylvie's mother; and I am sure that no other love so strong and pure can find an after-place in your heart. Aside from my own feelings upon the subject, I could not take advantage of the measure you propose through your great generosity, which would lead you to so misapply it."

A quick flush mounted to Mr. Granville's brow. She had touched the tenderest remembrance his whole life held, though all without avail to herself.

She flushed with a distant relative who had a daughter of about her own age, but who was her opposite in personal appearance and natural characteristics.

"Your mother had a romantic vein in her composition, and while very young engaged herself to an adventurer, a mere youth, whom I am just enough to credit with sincerity in the professions he made. He was a handsome fellow, and the daughter of your mother's guardian conceived a secret and violent attachment for him, which led her to the determination of breaking off the proposed match, with the object of herself eventually winning him."

"At the same time Arthur Clare had met Miss Cameron and was as much in love with her as his calm and feeble nature would admit; but he was timid, and in ill-health, and instead of himself pressing his cause intrusted it to me. Let me add that he was quite ignorant of the young lady's engagement. For good reasons, I was anxious that Clare should succeed in winning the heiress, but while Justine retained her faith in her betrothed lover I found it impossible to influence her in the other's favor."

"At this juncture her guardian's daughter—I do not consider it wise to mention names—came to my aid. She had discovered my motive, and revealed her own, proposing that we should work together for our mutual interests."

We found it necessary first to cause an estrangement between the lovers. Your dear was, like you, full of whimsical caprices and always ready for any madcap freak. Her fiancé was hot-headed and hot-blooded, attributes well calculated, to serve our purpose."

"Some hints were thrown in his way to the effect that Justine was not so true to him as the relations between them should insure; I believe the impression conveyed was that she favored another over equally if not more than himself, and that he was merely held in reserve should the other fall."

You will perceive it was rather a shallow ruse, but it succeeded. He grew madly jealous and constantly watchful."

"One night he received an anonymous note informing him of a clandestine meeting arranged between his fiancée and her secret lover. It brought the intended result. He was on the watch at the time and place indicated, and witnessed an interview between Justine Cameron and a slight, fair, handsome youth, upon whom she availed herself of the most endearing caresses and received like familiarities."

"Disenchanted, but sorely heated, he wrote her a bitter, reproachful note, and left her. His missive never reached her, and she was left to the humiliating supposition that he had tired of and deserted her."

"Smarting beneath the pangs of wounded self-pride and blasted faith, it required little urging to make Arthur Clare's wooing a short and successful one, and their married life would have been happy enough but that Justine was made aware of the manner in which her first love had been imposed upon."

"The scene he had witnessed was only a masquerade, and the supposed favored lover was her guardian's daughter dressed in male attire, playing her part all the better for the end she had in view, but which she never attained after a. It was she, in a fit of remorse, after discovering that she had plotted and acted in vain, who told the truth to Justine."

"This was only a short time before your mother died, but I think she found means to send a full explanation of her apparent faithlessness to the young fellow, whom she loved to the last better than she ever could have learned to love her weak, timid husband. At any rate, he has shown himself to be my enemy since that."

"I have given you the outline of the story, my dear. You can fill it in at your leisure, in the manner which suits you best. As it stands, you are acute enough to perceive that it was my will which accomplished the result I desired; and I am just as determined now to accomplish my present purpose. I have only cited an instance of what I have done where I was neither immediately nor vitally interested. With my own interests at stake, you must be convinced that I would prove more fertile in resource and unswerving in action until I gained the desired goal."

"Oh, what a villain you have proved yourself!" cried Justine, with aversion in her voice and face. "And I thought you the personation of honor and generosity!"

"It is possible that your kindness to me was only a mask; that your intention to eventually marry me was preconcerted and entertained at the time when I—a little child—was left to your care?"

"No, my dear!" returned her guardian, coolly. "I did not contemplate this end, for I never anticipated being driven to it. Lambert's discovery suggested it; but I could have made terms with him had you at first consented to marry him. Afterward I found myself too nearly in the fellow's power to attempt to conciliate him. I have no fear of him now, though, and when we are wedded, I can bid even Gerald Fonteney defiance."

"Who?" asked Justine, with vivid distinctness, every trace of color fading from her face.

"Ah! I had meant to mention no names. But, since I have done so, it only remains to add that Gerald Fonteney was the hot-headed lover, once your mother's fiancé."

Justine turned her gaze upon him, her eyes full of a strange, excited glitter.

"Heaven does mete out justice some

alternative. Percy Lambert discovered the truth and acted upon it. I have reasons to believe that I have secret enemies at work against me. My only assurance of absolute safety lies in the course I have proposed. Willing or unwilling, Justine Clare, you must marry me."

"Never!" she asserted, defiantly. "Not if the evidence of your unworthiness of trust and utter selfishness, which you have so openly avowed, were records of light, instead. How much less you can imagine when your own revelations force me to lose my respect for you."

"A point or two from my past experience may serve to show you how useless it will be to resist me. As I look at you now, sitting there with defiance on your tongue and in your face, you are the very picture of Justine Cameron as she was eighteen—no, nineteen years ago. Just as spirited and just as confident, yet I found means to bend her to my will. I always do."

"Justine Cameron! She was my mother," said Justine, softly.

"Yes, let me tell you the story of her life. It will possess the double interest of being both new and instructive. Your mother, like yourself, was an orphan and an heiress. She resided with a distant relative who had a daughter of about her own age, but who was her opposite in personal appearance and natural characteristics."

"Your mother had a romantic vein in her composition, and while very young engaged herself to an adventurer, a mere youth, whom I am just enough to credit with sincerity in the professions he made. He was a handsome fellow, and the daughter of your mother's guardian conceived a secret and violent attachment for him, which led her to the determination of breaking off the proposed match, with the object of herself eventually winning him."

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Justine turned her gaze upon him, her eyes full of a strange, excited glitter.

"Heaven does mete out justice some

times!" she cried. "Your own deception has foiled you at last, Mr. Granville. Gerald Fonteney is my husband!"

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 123.)

ROYAL KEENE,

California Detective:

A ROMANCE OF FOUR GIRLS' LIVES.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,

CHAPTER XXII.

UNEXPECTED VISITORS.

ON Twenty-third street, only a few hundred yards from Broadway, was a handsome brown-stone mansion.

Unlike all the other houses in the street, which had lights flashing from the windows, this one was perfectly dark. The blinds were drawn down closely, and nothing without gave sign of life within.

The night was a dark and cloudy one; but few people were passing in the street, for the hour of ten had struck, and even Broadway began to be less crowded with human forms.

It was strange, this house dark and solitary beside the brilliantly lighted ones at its side!

The mansion was not deserted, though; for there was just a little glimmer of light through the stained glass panel over the door.

Yet, despite the gloom which hung around the house, it had a steady stream of visitors, some on foot and some in carriages.

They ascended the steps, rung the bell, and the door opened almost instantly, showing plainly that the guardian of the portal was near at hand and on the alert.

Had any one of a curious turn of mind stood in the street and watched the entry of the visitors, he would have noticed that there were no ladies among them, and that they were all well dressed—plainly men of standing.

Some of the visitors walked directly by the colored gentleman who attended to the door, merely nodding their heads as they passed; these were evidently no strangers to the house. Others paused on the threshold and exchanged a few words with the ebony guardian, and then passed on; these seemed to be strangers to the house and doorkeeper.

But, when the guests had passed the outer door, an inner one, tightly closed, barred their passage; and, behind the door, another colored gentleman, through a small wicket, kept a wary eye upon the applicants for admission.

Passing the second Cerberus, the visitors ascended a broad and winding stair-case, covered by a velvet carpet, into which the foot sunk, so rich was the texture. At the head of the stairway a richly-stained glass door gave entrance to a parlor, so magnificently fitted up that it seemed like the palace of some Eastern king.

It was, indeed, the reception room of a monarch, King Farol! A sovereign, whose crown jewels are formed of the pearly tears of gamblers' beggared wives and children, and the red life-drops from the ruined suicide's heart.

The elegant mansion we have described was what is commonly termed a "club-room," in plainer English, a "gambling hall."

The latter name is apt. Few men stake their money upon the turning of a card but find it so in the end.

The paws of "the tiger" are velvet ones, but the claws they hide give terrible wounds. The room was well filled with players. Quite a little knot of people were gathered around the faro table.

Every once in a while, one of the players, his face pale and haggard, would leave the little circle, walk, almost mechanically, to the sideboard, covered with a glittering array of decanters, fill himself a glass of brandy and toss it off at a draught, then return again to the green-covered board, whereon, perhaps, he was staking not only his money but his reputation upon the uncertain chance of the card handled by the crotchety fingers of the professional gambler.

Seated in a chair near the faro-table, watching the game but not playing, was David Van Rensselaer.

To judge from his listless manner, one would think that he had strolled into the gaming saloon merely for the purpose of passing away an idle hour, than of risking his money at the game of chance.

The entrance of two more visitors, who strolled carelessly into the room, attracted Van Rensselaer's attention.

One of the two was Bishop. The other was an elaborately got up individual, with light, curly hair and flowing side whiskers, who looked like an Englishman.

When Bishop saw Van Rensselaer, he excused himself to his friend and came at once to the New-Yorker.

"Who have you got there?" Van Rensselaer asked.

"He's a young Englishman whom I was introduced to to-night at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. His name is Thornly. He's just from the other side of the water, plenty of money and very little brains. He wanted a little amusement, so I volunteered to show him around."

"Is he going to play?"

"I guess I can induce him to if the bank is willing to do the fair thing by me," said Bishop, with a covert glance in the face of the other.

"Well, I don't know much about it," Van Rensselaer observed, carelessly. "Doctor Hallen, yonder, has some interest in the establishment, I believe. Van Rensselaer indicated a slender, saw-toothed man, with small gray eyes, who was leaning carelessly on a chair near the sideboard.

"I'll speak to him; but, first, I'll introduce the Englishman to you."

Bishop joined the stranger and brought him over to where Van Rensselaer was.

"Allow me, Thornly, to introduce you to Mr. Van Rensselaer, one of our old New-York stock."

The gentlemen bowed and shook hands.

"Excuse me for a moment; I wish to speak to a friend over there," and Bishop left the two together and accosted the man leaning on the back of the chair.

wonder. The tones of his voice seemed strangely familiar to him. The Englishman did not seem to notice the look.

"Your voice seems very familiar to me," Van Rensselaer said.

"Yes, deuced odd, isn't it? never saw you before, you know," the Englishman replied, still sucking the head of the little cane.

Bishop and Hallen had walked over to one of the windows and were engaged in a busy conversation.

"I won't do it," said Hallen, decidedly, in answer to something that Bishop had said to him.

"Oh, yes, you will!" replied Bishop, coolly; "there ain't a bit of use of trying to kick up a fuss. Better acknowledge the corn at once."

"How in blazes did you put up this job?" asked Hallen, in sudden anger.

"Don't you worry 'bout that," said Bishop, coolly and soothingly; "the thing is fixed, and you can no more stop it than you can roll the East River backward. It's a good offer, better take it. He's played out now, I tell you; shake 'em."

For a few moments the gambler was silent, evidently weighing the matter over in his mind. Suddenly he spoke.

"I'll do it!" he cried, with an oath; "he'd throw me overboard in a minute if he took it into his head to do so."

"You never said a truer thing in your life, Doc. It's a bargain, then?"

"Yes."

The two separated.

But, as Bishop was crossing the room to where Van Rensselaer and the Englishman were, a tall, slender, young fellow, with a white hat and a reckless, jaunty air, sauntered into the room.

"Well, Bob?" questioned Bishop, anxiously accosting the new-comer.

"It's all right," said the other, with a wink; "my 'get-up' took both the darkeys for all they were worth. Lord! you ought to have seen the old inside cuss stare when I snapped the bracelets on him. He started to raise a howl, but I put a revolver under his nose and he weakened."

"The men are in the house, then?"

"All correct, but we can't get at the back way; the doors down-stairs are locked."

"Haven't either of the darkeys got the keys?"

"No, we searched them."

"We'll have to look out for them up here then. Come with me, and we'll quietly make our way to the door."

So the two sauntered into the back room, and stationed themselves at one of the doors there. So carefully had they gained their position, that no one suspected they had any other motive than an idle curiosity to overlook the game.

The Englishman had been staring around the room like an owl brought suddenly into the light. Suddenly he took his cane down from his mouth, drew a whistle from his pocket, placed it to his lips, and blew a shrill blast upon it.

"So quick had been the action, that even Van Rensselaer, standing by his side, had not noticed it until the shrill sound pierced his ears."

The room was in confusion in an instant. All realized that danger was near at hand.

A second more and the blue-coated Metropolitans poured in through the doorway.

The gamblers made a frantic rush toward the rear door, but Bishop and the white-hatted youth, with drawn revolvers, kept them back.

"Surrender, gentlemen; resistance is useless!" cried the sergeant in charge of the attacking party. "Who is the proprietor?"

"That man, David Van Rensselaer!" exclaimed Hallen, pointing to the young man.

There was a tableau of astonishment, for few within the room suspected that Van Rensselaer had any thing to do with the management of the "club-room."

"You villain!" cried Van Rensselaer, in wrath.

"Fall in, gentlemen," said the officer.

The Englishman had disappeared during the confusion.

CHAPTER XXIII.  
TWO FAILURES.

GUARDED by a strong detachment of police, the prisoners were marched off to the station house.

Van Rensselaer and Doc Hallen accidentally came side by side as the little procession moved onward.

"Why did you betray me?" Van Rensselaer asked. "The arrest to you would amount to nothing, but the exposure will ruin me forever. If you had not spoken, they would have believed that I was merely a visitor like the rest."

"They're rung in a 'cold deck' on you, sport," the gambler replied, flippantly. "This job has been put up. If I hadn't spoken, they would have got it out of somebody else. I'm not over and above flush, and I don't care to put out a thousand or so to get out of the scrape."

"I would have stood all that; I would have willingly given five times one thousand to have avoided this infamy," Van Rensselaer said, bitterly.

"What does it amount to, anyway?" Hallen exclaimed, carelessly. "New York will forget all about it in a week. 'Tisn't much of a disgrace to run a faro-shop nowadays. A member of Congress has done it, and don't our friend, John, mix with all the big-bugs down at Long Branch and at Saratoga? You forget, too, that one of our most prominent politicians made his money in the 'policy' business—a regular two-cent affair."

"The name I bear has never figured in a police court before," Van Rensselaer muttered, sullenly.

"Well, why don't you square the captain in charge of the squad? If you make it an object, he'll probably be able to fix it so that you can slip off."

"I'll try it!" Van Rensselaer said, eagerly, and his face brightened up at the prospect of escape.

He easily obtained permission to speak to the officer, and found to his gratification that he was well acquainted with him.

"This is an ugly affair," he said to the officer.

"Yes; I'm sorry for you, Mr. Van Rensselaer."

"Isn't there any way of arranging this matter?" Van Rensselaer asked, quietly.

"What do you mean?" asked the officer, casting a glance backward to see if any of his men were within earshot.

course you understand that it won't amount to any thing, except to make a little talk about me."

"Yes, of course I know that," the officer said. He had figured in too many police raids before not to know that the prisoners only went through a farce of an examination and were either discharged or jailed, and that no punishment was ever meted out to the high-toned gamblers, whatever might be done to the smaller fry who ran "keno" games, and robbed their victims by cents instead of dollars.

"Captain, is a hundred dollars any object to you?"

"Well—yes," the policeman said, slowly.

"And if you were to arrive at the station a hundred dollars in pocket and one prisoner short, it wouldn't make any difference, would it, in a case like this, where you know perfectly well that the prisoner will be discharged after a few minutes' examination?"

The officer was silent for a moment. Van Rensselaer watched him closely; he guessed he was thinking the matter over.

"Mr. Van Rensselaer," said the officer, suddenly, "I don't pretend to be any more honest than the law allows. In a case like this, I don't think that I would be neglecting my duty much if I were to take your hundred dollars and let you slide, but I don't want to rob you of your money."

"Rob me?" Van Rensselaer said, in surprise.

"Exactly; as I understand, you don't want your name to get into the papers mixed up in this affair."

"Well, it's too late. If you were to slip off, it wouldn't prevent the whole particulars from being published, and it would probably result in getting me broke."

"But I do not understand?" Van Rensselaer exclaimed, in amazement.

"Why, the whole thing is a put-up job to publish you as being the proprietor of the place. There's a newspaper feller along. The house was 'pulled' just on purpose to get you."

"But the motive?" Van Rensselaer questioned, breathlessly.

"You've got an enemy and he's fixed this affair. He's a pretty powerful one, too, I should judge. He's got all the 'press-gang' at his back and the superintendent, too. So you see it's no use to kick; I can't help you any."

Van Rensselaer fell back to his former position, rage burning in his heart. He guessed only too well who had struck the blow. He remembered the threat of Royal Keene. "First your reputation, then your life. The threat had been kept."

The party reached the police-station. A judge was already on the bench ready for the case.

The farcical examination was proceeded with, and in twenty minutes the case was concluded.

Van Rensselaer was placed under bail, for which they readily accepted his personal recognizance, and the case was dismissed.

There was but one reporter in the courtroom, Joe Oward, and Van Rensselaer accosted him.

Joe had just closed his note-book, and a smile illuminated his face as he thought what a splendid article he could write up about the affair.

"You are a reporter?" Van Rensselaer said, shortly.

"I am, sir," Joe answered, blandly.

"You are the only one here, I believe?"

"Yes, sir."

"I want to keep this affair out of the newspapers; can it be arranged?"

"Yes, I guess so," Joe said, carelessly.

Van Rensselaer's face lighted up.

"Ah, how much? I am willing to pay handsomely."

"Fifty thousand dollars," said the reporter, twirling his pencil in his fingers.

"What?" cried Van Rensselaer, enraged, "you are either drunk or mad."

"Neither, sir," replied Oward, calmly, "but I fancy that you are, when you imagine for a single instant that you can fetter the Press of New York city or prevent a newspaper reporter from saying just what he likes in his article. You can do that sort of thing in Penn Yan but not in New York. Good-evening, sir." And the reporter hurried away, leaving Van Rensselaer mad with rage.

He left the court-room and hastened uptown. The cool air of the night was welcome to his feverish brow.

"To-morrow it will be all over New York," he muttered; "but I'll be even with that scoundrel for this night's work, though."

Then suddenly to his mind came the thought of the Englishman who had called himself Thornly.

"No wonder that his voice sounded familiar to me," he muttered, bitterly. "It was Keene disguised. Oh, fool that I was not to have recognized him at once!"

Van Rensselaer's thoughts were far from being pleasant as he walked rapidly onward.

As he opened the door of his mansion, Clara came out of the parlor to greet him.

"You are up late, Clara," he said, with an effort striving to conceal his annoyance.

"Yes; Mr. Lawrence has just gone away."

"He made a long call."

"Yes; what do you suppose has happened, David?" Clara asked, gleefully.

"I'm sure I can't guess," he replied, absently; his thoughts were on other things.

"Lawrence has proposed."

"He has, eh?" The brother did not appear to be overjoyed at the news.

"Yes," and then Clara watched her brother's face for a moment. "Why, you don't seem to be a bit glad."

"Oh, yes, I am," he replied, quickly. "I am not very well to-night; that is the reason probably why I look so."

"Yes, he offered himself to-night and I accepted him. He's been paying attention now for nearly three years, and I thought it was about time that I made up my mind."

"I agree with you there," Van Rensselaer said, dryly. "You have at last discovered that you love him?"

"Well, I don't know that," the girl said, slowly. "I don't really think I like him any better than I used to. But I suppose I ought to get married sometime, and he's got plenty of money, and I don't like anybody else better than I do him."

"And so you concluded to accept him?" David's lip curled with a slight sneer as he put the question. Clara did not notice the look that was upon her brother's face.

"Yes; I want to go to Europe, too, and I can't afford it out of my own money."

"It's very convenient to have a rich husband to pay the bills, Clara," David said, gravely.

"That's what I thought," she said, carelessly. "Well, good-night, I'll go to bed now. Dolly is coming to see me again to-morrow evening."

Clara went upstairs while David went into the library, and, turning up the light, sat down to think.

"The first blow has been successful," he muttered; "the second will be aimed at my fortune. Curse the luck!" he cried, listlessly. "Just as Clara has succeeded in hooking this wealthy fool the terrible scandal must come out! I'll take care that Mr. Lawrence does not back out though. He has committed himself and now he must go on."

Van Rensselaer remained for awhile motionless in a deep study.

"Can the heir be living?" he cried, at length. "If she is, this Keene can find her, the moment he does so, the second blow will come. I must prepare to meet it."

Van Rensselaer had uneasy slumbers that night.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 119.)

Brave Jessie,  
THE PIONEER'S DAUGHTER.

BY CAPT. BRUN ADAMS.

WITHIN a mile of where the pleasant village of Bardstown now stands, there is a deep valley, walled in by high, steep hills, through which runs a creek of considerable size, the waters of which an early pioneer put to good use by causing them to furnish motive power to a very primitive, but exceedingly effective saw-mill.

At the time when the clangor of this mill was first heard in the valley, the Indians had almost entirely been driven from Kentucky, though they still made occasional raids from across the river, either to hunt over their once favorite grounds, or else as war parties to attack, burn and slay amid the outlying settlements.

For nearly a year after its erection the owner, John Morton, or Uncle Johnnie as he was generally known throughout the neighboring settlements, remained undisturbed in his labors, and there scarcely ever passed a day but what the great saw was busy ripping apart the huge poplar logs into material with which the pioneers erected their new homes in the wilderness.

It is true that on two occasions small bands of Indians were seen lurking in the neighborhood, and once the old pioneer struck a trail that clearly indicated a large war-party had passed, moving southward, or into the interior. This looked bad for the moment, but as time passed, and nothing more was heard of the Indians, the incident was forgotten.

But, notwithstanding this apparent security, Uncle Johnnie, who was known as a thorough woodsman, and experienced in Indian craft and warfare, never permitted himself to forget for an instant that any day or night might bring upon him a swift and deadly peril. He never left his cabin on the hill overlooking the mill without his rifle, or without instructing Jessie, his only child, a beautiful girl of some sixteen or seventeen years of age, to keep a constant watch for danger, and on the least sign thereof, to retreat within the house, bar the heavy door, and fire off the old fowling-piece as a signal to him.

"Shall I fire it at any thing, father?" asked Jessie, with a smile, after the old man had instructed her in the use of the weapon.

"Of course, of course! if you have the chance; but, don't expose that little head, or some one may fire at you," was the reply, and the pioneer went off to his work, satisfied that if an attack was made on the cabin, one Indian at least would be pretty sure to catch the heavy charge of slugs that lay in the old ducking gun.

It was late in the spring when the mill first began to work, and until the red buds were beginning to open it continued running uninterruptedly.

The old pioneer was sitting in his door one evening toward the latter part of May, when his quick ear caught the sound of hoof-strokes coming from the forest behind the house, and a moment later, before he could reach his rifle from the corner where it rested, a horseman, covered with dust, evidently from a long and rapid journey, rode round the corner of the cabin and drew rein near the door.

"Uncle Johnnie," the stranger cried, with ready hospitality bade the stranger "sit," but the other declined, at the same time asking if this was Mr. Morton.

Receiving the assurance that it was, he continued, speaking as though he was in a hurry to be off.

"I have been sent out by Colonel Dunlap from the fort up on Salt river to warn the outlying settlers in this section. You will have to leave your house, Mr. Morton, if you wish to escape the storm, and get inside the stockade below as soon as possible. Our scouts have brought in word that a large war-party, several hundred strong, of Shawnees are preparing, or rather have by this time started, for a raid on the settlements on the Beech and Rolling Forks. Where is the next house?"

Used to such emergencies, the old pioneer, without wasting time in questions, gave the desired information, and the courier was gone to warn others in like manner.

That night, as may readily be imagined, was an anxious one to the pioneer.

Had he been alone he would have given the startling information but a passing thought, and gone to work as usual; but, with his only child exposed to danger, the matter became serious, and he determined to follow the messenger's advice, and at once seek shelter in the fort, some fifteen miles below.

Preparations to leave at an early hour next morning were at once begun. Such articles as were movable were carried some distance back into the timber, and secreted in a small cave in the cliffs, while others were dragged into the adjoining field and hidden as well as might be in the weeds and brush.

Day was breaking when Uncle Johnnie declared that every thing possible had been done, and then, after snatching a hasty meal, he went down to the mill to remove and hide the saw, at that time and place almost worth its weight in silver.

This was a matter of some difficulty, and to get at the lower end of the saw, he was obliged to remove two of the large planks that constituted the flooring of the mill, and which were directly over the sluice which held the water that turned the machinery. Intent upon his work, and eager to finish it at the earliest moment possible, the old pioneer worked away, utterly unconscious of what might be transpiring around him.

At that instant, the well-known report of the old fowling-piece rung sharply out upon the morning air, and quickly springing back into the mill, he glanced hastily, and with beating heart, toward the cabin, where Jessie was waiting his return.

The sight that met his eye almost bereft him of motion. For an instant he stood and gazed upon the appalling scene in helpless agony.

The view of the cabin and its immediate surroundings was, as I have said, perfectly uninterrupted, and now, where but a moment before every thing had been so calm and peaceful, he saw through the gray of early morning the forms of half a score savages flitting about the yard in front, while just on the brow of the hill, he discovered the prostrate figure of the warrior who had fallen before the unerring aim of Jessie.

All this he saw at a glance, and as the starting war-whoop pealed out, and the savages made a combined rush against the barred door, the brave old man started, forward to attack, single-handed, the overpowering numbers that threatened his child.

His first movement instantly attracted the attention of the Indians, and three of their number, with a yell of triumph, dashed down the hillside toward the mill.

The old Indian-fighter instantly saw the advantage this movement gave him, and retracing his steps, he paused just within the open end of the building, and coolly faced the charging savages.

Waiting his time until the shot should be a certain one, Uncle Johnnie, when the moment came, threw up his rifle, and seemingly without aim, fired at the leading warrior.

The Indian fell at the crack, but without waiting to see the result, the pioneer again turned, sprung upon the log that lay ready to be sawed, ran across the chasm left in the flooring by the removal of the plank, and, jumping lightly down, concealed himself behind a pile of pancheons that fortunately lay at hand.

Sure of their prey, now that the dreaded rifle was empty, the two remaining Indians came leaping down the hill, across the narrow level and into the mill.

Eager in the chase, with their eyes fixed upon the open beyond the building, across which their victim would have to pass before he could escape, the two warriors dashed forward and saw not the chasm at their feet until too late.

Together they went down, uttering a wild yell of terror, and the next instant were floundering in the deep sluice, whose slimy sides afforded not the slightest hold by which they could sustain themselves.

They were not long in their misery, however. With something that sounded much like an oath, the old pioneer sprang forward, and seizing the heavy crowbar, with which he was wont to handle the logs, he leaned over the sluice and dealt two or three blows.

The shaven heads of the drowning savages were crushed in as though they had been egg-shells. A hurried floundering in the water, a gasp or two, and the helpless wretches sunk from sight.

Three of the nine—that was the number of the attacking party—were out of the way, for, in fact, for he suddenly remembered that Jessie had not been idle, and the pioneer arose, and commenced to rapidly reload his rifle, with a new hope springing up in his heart.

But the situation was still desperate. Five stalwart, active, bloodthirsty savages, all armed with rifles, opposed to one white man, for, alas! he knew that no further aid could come from the old fowling-piece in the hands of his brave daughter. Every grain of powder was in the horn that hung at his side!

The ball was driven home and the rod replaced in its grooves before the savages on the hill discovered the condition of affairs at the mill, and if then required but a moment for them to comprehend the truth.

One of their number lay dead half-way between the foot of the hill and where the daring white man stood. Him they saw, but they did not see the other two, and immediately divined that they had fallen also, in some manner to them unaccountable.

Now thoroughly enraged at so unusual a resistance and so heavy a loss where they had expected an easy victory, four of the warriors turned and started down the hill, determined to wreak a speedy vengeance upon their daring enemy.

It was at this instant that Morton's eye fell upon the rifle that lay beside the Indian he had shot, and he at once determined to possess it all hazards. He knew it was loaded, and saw the immense advantage it would be to him.

Leaving his own piece against the log, he darted forward. It was a hazardous undertaking, but the very boldness of the act completely deceived the advancing braves, and caused them to halt and await his coming, convinced that he was about to surrender himself a prisoner.

The fact of his leaving his rifle behind further tended to deceive them, nor did they realize the truth until the pioneer had secured the prize and began a hasty retreat.

Two of the braves instantly fired, but without effect, and then all four again dashed forward, yelling like demons as they came.

Within ten feet of where the first lay another warrior fell, shot through the brain, and, as if echoing the report, came the ringing crack of the old fowling-piece from the cabin, and the Indian on guard was seen to stagger wildly and then pitch headlong to the earth.

But three left, and a loaded rifle in his hands! Truly, the prospect of ultimate escape or victory was not nearly so dark as it had been a moment before.

So at least thought the old pioneer, as he coolly raised the Indian's rifle, and at forty paces again fired, but this time with only partial success. The gun "hung fire," thereby slightly disconcerting his aim, but he managed, nevertheless, to plant the ball deeply in the Shawnee's shoulder, totally disabling but not killing him.

The two remaining Indians now dashed across the level with yells of savage triumph. They were now doubly sure of their victim, but the brave old man had no intention of giving in, now that the battle was almost won.

Through the mill, out the further end, down the embankment, and around the base of the old Indian mound, that lay some little distance off toward the river, the pioneer ran, feeling the powder in the muzzle of his rifle, and letting the ball roll down upon it, using no patch. There was no time to draw the rod, and he knew for a short range the charge would do as well as though it had been properly placed.

The mound of which I have spoken was an unusually large one of its kind, there being many such throughout the State, some seventy-five or a hundred yards in length by half as many in breadth. The sides were very steep, and covered with a dense, almost impassable thicket.

The pioneer hoped, in the race around this artificial hill, to be able to gain upon his pursuers to permit of his crossing the bottom that lay between it and the hill upon which the cabin stood, and with this in view, he strained every nerve, and ran with surprising swiftness, considering the number of years he carried.

The Indians were slightly delayed in crossing the opening in the floor of the mill, and, brief as was the time lost, it proved of inestimable value to the hard-pressed man.

By the time the savages reached the upper end of the mound, Uncle Johnnie was just turning the lower.

Half-way across the bottom he turned his head, glanced back, and quick as thought dropped flat upon his face just in time to permit the ball from the Indian's rifle to pass harmlessly above.

Springing to his feet, he again dashed forward, reached the undergrowth that lined the foot and side of the slope at this point, and was instantly under cover.

Still determined to capture their foe at all hazards, the Shawnees pressed on, and, by the time Uncle Johnnie was half-way up the steep ascent, they entered the bushes at the spot where he had disappeared.

"Here, father, take this rifle," were the words that greeted him as he, panting and well-nigh exhausted, gained the upper level, and Jessie ran out from behind the large beech tree, from whence she had watched the chase, and handed her father the rifle of the Indian she had last killed.

"You are a brave girl, Jessie," was all the old man said, as he grasped the piece, but the words spoke volumes coming from him.

"Quick, Jessie! to cover!" and they both sprang behind a tree near at hand. Supposing that the white man would make for his cabin, the two warriors came rapidly up the hill, one slightly in advance of the other.

"Be ready to hand me my rifle, child," whispered the father through his clenched teeth, "and keep the muzzle upward." As he ceased speaking the head of the leading savage appeared above the brush, and instantly the sharp, whiplike crack of the rifle broke the silence.

"Quick, girl!" exclaimed the pioneer, as he threw the discharged piece upon the ground, and, as the last remaining savage, in wild dismay, turned to fly, the fatal bullet struck him fairly between the shoulders, sending him headlong to the earth.

"Surely the hand of a good Providence is in this," said the old pioneer, as he took his brave child in his arms and kissed her fondly. "Was there ever the like of it? Nine slain and we have received no scratch. But, tell me, Jessie, where got you the powder for your second charge?"

"I had saved a little, father, thinking that at some time or other just such an emergency might arise—that I might be caught alone while you were away," she answered, seriously.

The danger, for the moment, was passed, but they knew that another party of savages might, at any instant, appear; hence, it became necessary to leave the place at once.

Hastening to the house, the old pioneer gathered up such articles as had been prepared to carry with them, and then, locking the heavy outer door, they plunged into the forest.

The sun was just setting when they reached the fort and were safe.

The next morning a scouting-party visited the scene of the conflict and brought in the spoils of the field, thus proving the truth of the seemingly impossible statement made by Uncle Johnnie.

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## THE PICNIC.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

Oh, yes, we'd a very nice time  
At the picnic to-day in the country;  
To say we had not would indeed  
Be a very great piece of effort 'ry.  
'Twas the best one I ever attended—  
Quite perfect in pastime and feast;  
In fact I will say it was splendid,  
With nothing to mar it the least—

Except Jones fell over a fence  
He's backward as every one knows—  
Well, he fell over backward and spoilt  
That exquisite crook in his nose.  
In helping Miss Brown o'er the creek,  
Smith took her up light as a feather,  
And I laughed till I made myself sick,  
For both tumbled in it together!

And Blodkins was chased by a snake,  
Which frightened him nearly to death,  
And down through the briars he went,  
Crying, "Murder!" till quite out of breath;  
And Johnson fell out of a tree,  
Which he went up to fasten a saw;  
And Brandon was stung by a bee,  
Which indeed was a terrible thing;  
And Miss Inskip got woefully poisoned  
By getting too close to a vine,  
And Miss Wate strained an ankle in tripping,  
And straightway went in a decline;  
And somebody stirred up some hornets,  
And we hastily shifted our spikies;  
And the savage, outrageous musketoes  
Will want nothing to eat for a year.

There was nothing that happened besides  
To mar our delight and our pleasure,  
Save a rain, which for two mortal hours  
Poured down in a copious measure;  
And the grasshoppers got in the cream,  
And the spiders got into the pies,  
And the ants burrowed into the cakes,  
And fast in the butter were flies.

We returned like a party of pilgrims  
Who had roamed in the desert a year,  
Though the picnic was quite a success,  
And I'll ever consider it dear.  
But, if any thing very unusual  
Had happened to make me complain,  
I'm exceedingly sure I should never  
Go out to another again!

## The "Thousand Islands."

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IN THE WILDERNESS."

## IV.—AN ISLAND FEAST.

It was a beautiful spot, that upon which we beached our boats and prepared that noonday feast. Before us lay the vast St. Lawrence, studded with islands green in their verdant covering and dotted here and there by neat white cottages and emerald fields. The trees under which we sat were patriarchs in their day, such as those of which Bryant sang:

"Mossy and tall and dark,"

Under this green canopy the Indian maid had rested, and over these blue waters the light canoe had bounded before the name of the white man was heard upon these shores. The grass beneath was soft and green, the birds sung, and the sound of merry voices came across the blue waters and from the grove above us.

"The man who can not enjoy this," said Viator, lying back upon the grass in supreme enjoyment, "don't deserve to live. I say, Billy, tell the boys that story about the old fellow you rowed in '58."

"You s'all pardon me, Mossu," replied Joe, "but how s'all I do credit to *ze cistine* if he distract my mind by zat story. Oh-h! *mon Dieu!* how mad he make me, zat same *scelerat*, when he tell zat story!"

"Go on with your cooking, then, but hurry up your cakes for I am getting wolfish. If you keep me much longer I shall turn cannibal and eat you."

"I s'all set ver' hard on your stomach, Mossu Viator," said Joe. "Aha! you s'all wish you 'ave not eat me, begar! Old Jacques ver' tough."

"Sing something, Viator," said Jim.

"You used to be good at that. Come!"

"All right. If you have tears, prepare to shed them now, for this is a mournful ballad. Come in *hard* on the chorus."

And in a full, rich tenor, such as few possessed, Viator sang a queer old ballad now passed from the memory of most except those who are getting down into the vale of years. But, Harry Viator was prolific of such songs:

"I love to see the table set,  
And the very best of waiters;  
And I love to have them pass to me,  
The biggest kind of *laters*."

"Chorus, boys!"

"I've just dropped in to see you all,  
And what's zwine on, and what's gwine on,  
I've just dropped in to see you all,  
And what's gwine on."

"I love to see the wavin' grass,  
Before the wavin' grass is cut;  
And I love to see an old gray horse,  
And when he goes, he goes it!" (Chorus.)

A roar of laughter was the commentary upon this mournful ditty, and in the midst of it we went to dinner.

Such a dinner no one ever ate under a roof built up by the hands of man. It was a dream of Arcadia, a vision of rural bliss; and even now, when all is past and gone, I close my eyes sometimes and think of the merry days, when we sat together under the spreading branches, and listened to the songs which none but Viator could sing.

And the cookery! Dear old Joe and Billy across the waves of Ontario, and down among the green islands where you dwell, I send a greeting to you. May your lives be as a summer Idyl, and your old age green and pleasant as they deserve to be. And when your boats cleave the blue waters, send a thought across them to those who would be with you if they could!

The feast over and the pipes lighted, old Joe and Billy sit down to take their share. It was not our fault that they did not sit with us, but they would not have thought their work well done if they had not handed out each dish, and waited for the well-earned praise which was their due, and the "chips" we left when the repast was over showed that we were "workmen" who needed not to be ashamed. No better commentary upon the excellence of their work was needed than the eager zeal with which we put it out of sight. Fish, flesh and fowl disappeared with lightning-swiftness, and old Joe looked on in silent satisfaction.

"Zat is good, zat is excellent! Aha, Mossu Scribble—for so he rendered the august name of Scribner—"you 'ave great capacity for eat ze feesh, ze chicken, ze omelet, ze—begar, any ting. All same to you."

"I am a good eater, but I don't think the fellow needed to blurt it out in that highly offensive manner."

"I never heard a more correct summary of Scribner's gastronomic powers," said Viator. "Once, when he was at Trenton Falls, he fell in with a queer old genius, who looked on in silent admiration while Scrib. cleared the table. He commenced at one end of the bill and went through it and the old fellow gazed in wonder. Next day Scrib. was out with a bag and hammer getting specimens, and the old chap saw him,

and whispered to me: 'See that young chap over there; he's an *eater*, he is! Ain't satisfied with creatin' a famine in the hotel, but he's goin' to eat stun'. I reckon he's half-brother to the German stone-eater.' That name stuck to him for many a day."

"I think it is about time to hear Billy tell about the fellow he rowed," I said, impatiently. "Your stupid yarns do not interest any one, Viator."

So we spread ourselves upon the soft grass for our siesta, and Billy told the story of the "Melancholy Man."

The Tragedian's Plot.  
A STORY OF NEW YORK.

BY CAPT. CHARLES HOWARD.

It was a somber day in the month of October, full forty years ago. The inhabitants of New York had not seen the sky since early dawn, and every moment the leaden clouds that hung over the island threatened to break into a flood. Broadway—not the mighty, people-burdened thoroughfare of to-day—seemed quite deserted.

When the hands of old Trinity carried the twelfth numeral, a person emerged from a costume shop on Broadway, and after glancing fearfully about him, betook himself down the street at a gallop quite unbecoming what his face and dress designated him—a man beyond his three-score years and ten.

He spoke to no one as he hurried along. That he was not as old as he represented himself the shrewd observer might have guessed, but it was evident that he did not believe his disguise penetrable.

"I am almost there," he murmured, noting his surroundings, after having left Broadway far behind, "and if I do not succeed, then from the stage steps Mortimer Winthrop, and the curtain falls behind him forever. Lydia Farnsworth, I am not

the man who has been forbidden this house, and do you not think me overbold in entering it now?"

Then he drew his form to its full height, and looked, as he truly was, the handsome actor of thirty-five.

"Mortimer Winthrop, you are the most unprincipled man I ever saw!" said Lydia, eying him scornfully; "and when I say that you disgrace mankind and your honored profession I do not exaggerate the truth. By a lie you have entered this house, and, sir, I demand your immediate exit."

With insulted mien, and quivering finger, she pointed to the door; but the tragedian's answer to the demand was the fiendish laugh which he so well could frame.

"Girl, you don't know with whom you deal," he said, a moment later; "or, if you do, you are shooting wide of the mark now. Listen to me. I am not going to burden your ears with a declaration of the divine passion. These lips have breathed it into them already. I came hither to make this proposition: if you promise to become my bride, I will raise you to the height attained by Mrs. Siddons, for you possess the qualities essential to the attainment of such glory, or I will leave the stage, and in other pursuits make you the happiest woman on the Almighty's verdant footstool."

"And—"

"Hold, girl, I have not finished yet," he interrupted her. "And in the event of your rejection of the proposition, you shall become cognizant of the fate of Floyd Lalage, in a revelation which will drive the blood from your heart, and send you to the madhouse—that is, if you truly love the man."

A moment's silence followed the tragedian's last word, and then Lydia Farnsworth spoke:

"Mortimer Winthrop, base threatener, and, perhaps, murderer, I reject your propositions as I would reject the embrace of the Tartar. Depart immediately, and take with you the contempt and loathing of one who bids you do your accursed worst. There

temples, she staggered from the table and sunk to the floor.

At once Richard Farnsworth raised his daughter in his arms; but the eyes that stared at him were full of that light so often seen in the maniac's orbs!

He went to the officers of justice after Mortimer Winthrop; but he was not to be found, and after a week's search the officers concluded that he had left the city.

One dark night—a fortnight after the reception of the ghastly hand—a muffled figure descended a flight of steps beneath a large building in the southern part of the Empire City.

He bore a lamp, whose sickly rays revealed a pair of dark eyes, easily recognizable as Mortimer Winthrop's.

The stair terminated before a heavy battened door, which relieved the bareness of a newly-erected wall across a commodious cellar. He placed the lamp upon the damp ground, and unlocked the ponderous portals. They swung back with a hideous noise, and he stepped across the threshold.

"Floyd!"

The half-finished name was followed by the rattling of chains, and, a second later, the tragedian went to the ground, like a leaden statue.

"Free!"

The face that bent over the plotting actor was the haggard one of Floyd Lalage.

"What! have I killed him?" he cried. "No; but heavens! what a crushed skull! Have I strength enough to carry him? Yes, that I am free now, I could carry a ton of villains. Oh, why did I not discover the file sooner!"

Exerting his strength, the young man bore his persecutor from the spot, and, after placing him in a policeman's care, he hastened to the Farnsworth mansion.

His reception by its inmates pen can not describe, and when they saw that he possessed two hands their astonishment knew no bounds.

He had been abducted by Mortimer Win-



THE TRAGEDIAN'S PLOT.

traversing the streets of New York in the garb of an imbecile for nothing—I, the renowned tragedian to whose playing thousands nightly flock, at whose feet a wealthy city casts her offerings of gold and praise."

He was now near the palatial residence upon which his keen black eyes rested with a covetous and half-triumphant look, and a few moments later he passed the iron gate, and traversed the rich lawn to the house.

"I'll bring the beauty to the door," he murmured. "But no, she is at the window already. She has noticed me, and he! she divides the glass doors, and will tell the old man that he is not wanted here. Well do I know that he is not."

He was yet muttering, when the great glass door-windows yielded to a dimpled hand, and a tall and beautiful girl looked down upon the disguised one in the yard.

In a creaked voice he spoke her the day, and inquired after her father, whom he called Richard Farnsworth.

"Sir, he is at his place of business," she answered him, in a soft, low voice, and moving backward as if to retire.

"So much the better," he said, in a lower tone, advancing nearer the young girl. "Lady, I came to tell you of—of Floyd Lalage."

At this the girl's eyes flashed with mingled surprise and delight, and her whole manner at once changed.

"You know something of him, then?"

"Indeed I do, lady, and, for the present, none save I and yourself must know it."

"I will admit you, sir," she answered, quickly, and retired from the window.

The man bowed; Lydia Farnsworth retreated from his sight, and presently he stood in the magnificently-appointed parlor, and before the lovely creature whose presence he had sought.

"Now," she cried, with an eagerness which she did not attempt to conceal, "tell me about him. For ten days they have told me that he is dead, and would have me believe that the body found at the foot of the Battery was his. No, no, they are not going to fear me from him. I saw the mangled face of that corpse—mangled beyond recognition; I saw his garments—they were Floyd's—but the hands, they were not his. I know he lives, and that, in the Lord's good time, he will be restored to me. But speak out, old man, and tell me of him."

"I will speak out, Lydia Farnsworth," he said, in a tone that caused the girl to throw a searching look into his face; "but ere I speak further, let me show you who I am."

The act that followed the last word—the removal of the flesh-colored mask that covered his face—was superfluous, for, while his fingers were tearing it away, the girl had started back, and her now pallid lips were murmuring a name:

"Mortimer Winthrop!"

"Yes, Lydia Farnsworth," he said, enjoying the heiress' consternation, "I am

was a time when I respected you; but now—now your touch is contagion. But I am not to be frightened by a coward's threats. Go!"

"You have transformed me into a very demon, Lydia Farnsworth," cried the tragedian, moving toward the door, but still facing the merchant's daughter. "I will do my worst, and that shall out-horror horror. I will tell you that Floyd Lalage lives, but that he shall soon die. Some morning, upon your doorstep you shall find his hand, but his body shall be far hence. Ah! since you long for his return, he shall come, but by piecemeal."

These terrible words drove the rose hue from Lydia Farnsworth's face, and suddenly seizing a pistol, which lay on the mantel within reach, she directed it at the scoundrel's head.

"Another threat against him," she cried, "and the people shall never applaud you again. I will hear no more. I should have assumed this weapon sooner. Now, base-born man, begone!"

The actor laughed again, more fiendishly than before, then turned and left the dwelling.

When Richard Farnsworth returned from his place of business, his daughter acquainted him with the tragedian's fiery visit.

"He knows naught of Floyd, girl," said the merchant, with a sigh; "therefore he can not execute his horrible threat. Floyd, poor boy, is dead!"

The girl would not believe it true. Floyd Lalage had long been her lover, and the betrothal-ring still glistened upon her finger. But he had mysteriously disappeared, and a mangled body, believed to be his, had been found floating in the water at the foot of the battery, four days after the young man's disappearance. Although Lydia recognized the clothes worn by the corpse, she declared that it was not her lover's body, and her father, who had fallen in with the popular belief, could not reason her from her conviction.

Once before the scene just enacted in the merchant's parlor, she had rejected the hand of the well-known tragedian, and to him she attributed Floyd's disappearance, for she knew that he was her lover's only enemy.

For some days after the tragedian's departure, Lydia heard nothing regarding him and his threat; but she was soon to believe his words spoken in terrible earnest.

One morning her father discovered a little box occupying the front stoop, and immediately bore it back into the house, where the sight of it drove the color from his daughter's cheeks.

The lid was soon forced off, and lo! among numerous bits of paper lay a freshly-severed hand, and on one of the pale and icy fingers shone a ring, which Lydia Farnsworth recognized with a shriek!

"Father, 'tis Floyd's right hand!" she cried; "he lives, and the villain is executing his terrible threats. Oh, my head is bursting!" and throwing her hands wildly to her

throop, and placed in a dungeon, fashioned for his reception.

When the villain recovered from his swoon, he completed the unraveling of the mystery. The floating corpse had been stolen from Greenwood, and robed in Floyd Lalage's garments. The hand came from some dissecting-room. The actor would have taken Floyd's hand, but he dared not get any one to aid him, and feared to undertake the job alone.

After almost a month's captivity, the young man discovered an old file, which some one had thrust into a cranny far above his head in the cellar-wall, and, as the reader has seen, he used it to good advantage.

The tragedian died from the effects of his prisoner's blow, but not until he knew that the beautiful woman for whom he had left the honored stage, and plotted deeply and wickedly, was the bride of his rival.

## Forecastle Yarns.

BY C. D. CLARK.

## IV.—UNDER THE UPAS.

The gray-haired sailor, Jared Dean, had sailed the seas from boyhood—a rude, unlettered man, of few hopes or cares beyond living the life to which he was wedded, and finding a grave at last under the blue waters which had been his home.

The dim fore-castle, the song and story, the pipe of duty, the hurry of the tempest and the dead apathy of the calm were all the changes in his peculiar life. This man had a fund of anecdote peculiar to himself, and it was his delight to sit at night in the fore-castle, keeping his chums bound in the witchery of his tales, equaled only by the Arabian Nights.

"You, Jim Stone, bring yourself to anchor on the chest; Tom Leeway, stand off and on before the companionway, in case that blasted third-mate comes down on us like a flood. The rest of you drop your kedges where you can get holding-ground, and head well up into the wind, while I tell you the story of the Pizen Tree."

"Now, look here; there's a mighty many people on this airth that doubt a thing because they've never se'd it themselves. Now, that ain't ship-shape, in my opinion, acase there's lots of things I never see'd that I believe in. And so, when a blasted swab of a land-lubber tells me that sech a thing can't be, because it ain't in natur', I either estimate him as a blamed fool or despret ob-stinct."

"I was in the Island of Java, and there I bolted from my ship. Now, I don't believe in desarting, as a general rule, but, when your old man gets so he heaves hanspikes and blocks about your head, it's time to lay her dead afore the wind, going free, and make a starn chase of it. Me and Tom Burt—Tom was my chum, you know—went together acase we didn't care to stay, and we knowed well enough it wouldn't do to

stay in Batavia because the captain was short-handed, and he'd turn out every Dutchman in the city to find us if we dared to stay; so we got out of the city, at night, and made for the back country. We'd got paid off the day before—that was mighty foolish in the old man—and we calculated to get to one of the villages and stay there the rest of our natural lives. These people live so free and careless that a sailor hankers after the life they lead naturally."

"You know what a kentry Java is, Jim Stone, acase you've been there. The airth is covered with all kinds of plants, thousands upon thousands, and the sweetest flowers that ever grew blossoms on every side. Great trees, loaded down with fruits of every kind, and game enough to drive a sporting-man wild with joy. The people are very kind, too, unless you get foul of some of the old races, and then, like as not, you'll have to run a muck for your life. But, Tom and me didn't think of any thing except to get out of the city, and we never stopped until we were deep in the jungle, and had left the noise of the city far behind."

"Then we was happy; a sailor always is happy off duty, specially if he cut his stick to get off. We had each laid violent hands on a musket and ammunition, and felt safe ag'in' wild beasts, but when we got out in the wood we found that, like darned fools, we had lost our powder, and them muskets wa'n't no more use than crooked sticks. 'Twouldn't do to go back, though, for we knowed that, by this time, the old man was chargin' through Batavia like a roarin' lion looking for us, and like as not if he found us he'd seize us up to the rigging and give us a dozen, so we tramped on, deeper and deeper into the great woods, under branches that seemed to drop honey—so sweet was the flowers—jeered at by monkeys and mocked by the parrots, and we without as much as a charge of powder in the guns!"

"A pretty fix if we met a black panther, or any thing of that sort! But, we tramped on, and pretty soon got so deep into the woods that we couldn't have gone back if we wanted to ever so bad, for we had lost the way, and night was coming on. I began to feel streaked, mates, for I meant to make one of the villages before night, and didn't want to anchor in the jungle, not knowin' what pernicious beast might take a fancy to go for us. But, we tramped on, hungry and faint, until we came to a place where the jungle was open, and a great tree stood in the center of the prettiest little opening my eyes ever saw."

"See here, Jed! said Tom Bent, 'I can't go any further and I won't! Tigers or no tigers, panthers or no panthers, I'm going to riddle it out here.'"

"I looked round and didn't see how we could do any better, and I came to anchor beside him. He was restless, and after awhile got up and went off into the jungle, and came back pretty soon with his hands full of a handsome-looking fruit about as big as a plum."

"Don't eat them, Tom," says I; "you don't know what they be."

"He only laughed at me and tried to get me to take some, but I wouldn't tech them. He said they were mighty good, and when the darkness came we sat down under the tree and I made him go to sleep while I watch-ed. He was asleep and snoring in two min-its, and I tried to keep my eyes open too, but it was no use; and I dropped on the grass and there we lay, under the shade of the tree."

"I don't know how long I laid there, boys, but I woke with a great noise in my ears, and a flash of light in my eyes, sick and faint. I wasn't under the tree now, but layin' on the ground outside, and half a dozen black-looking Javaneses around me. I felt so deadly sick that I asked them what had happened, and they pointed to the tree and said 'Auchar.' I knew the name was the native name for the poison-tree, and that if these hunters had not come through and found us there, I should have been a dead man."

"It was all up with Tom, poor fellow! They had dragged him out from under the tree, but all they could do would not bring him back to life. Them chaps in Batavia tried to make me believe that the *fruit* Tom cat was pizen, and that I was only faint from hunger, but I knows *what* I know, and if Tom hadn't slept under the tree, he'd be alive now. Pass the grog; here's to poor Tom Bent."

And the old man drank in silence to the memory of his dead friend.

NOTE.—Old Jared Dean's belief in the Upas has many eager friends; but it is probable that his chum died from the effect of the poisonous fruit of which he partook, and that Jared himself was sick from hunger and exhaustion. The "Deadly Upas" is a fiction.

## Beat Time's Notes.

"T is the last rose o' summer," as the old maid said when she painted her cheek.

SPEAKING of a man, an exchange says: "The only faults he had were false teeth."

"SHE gave him her heart with her hand in 't," looked well in a new novel the other day.

Would it do to call a native of Venice a Venice-son?

A MAN said of his scolding wife: "Her pecks gave me a bushel of trouble."

If all flesh is earth, I know a fellow whose feet will make two small farms.

THE man who broke the bridge of his nose and blew all the shingles off the roof of his mouth by sneezing, advertises for a carpenter to mend his frame.

A STAR actor appears in many a char-acter.

WHAT is the difference between hello and sky-high?

JONES says he married a fortune, but it turned out to be a misfortune.

FEMALES, for their many whims, used to be called whim-men, now corrupted into women.

When many a man's thread of life is cut, it turns out to be a rope.

A GENTLEMAN's cap could easily be turned into a fool's-cap by simply giving it away—suggested by looking at my own just now.